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ABSTRACT

This study examines the connections between work, families, and early childhood education, and analyzes international trends and perspectives on parental leave. Chapter 1, "Introduction," shows that the increase in paid work by mothers makes families, work, and education important research and policy issues, and surveys reasons for this increase. Chapters 2 to 5 are international literature reviews that include research and policy documents from North America, the European community, Australia, the Nordic countries, and New Zealand. Chapter 2 introduces the literature reviews and discusses theories, models, and definitions of families, work, and education as used in the report. Chapter 3 reviews literature on the birth of the child and subsequent care by its parents in the early months of life, as well as parental involvement in paid work. Chapter 4 reviews international literature that links child care provision to the participation in paid work of parents with young children. Chapter 5 examines literature on the flexible forms of work undertaken by parents, especially part-time work by men and women. Chapter 6 focuses on case studies of employment and child care arrangements among New Zealand families. Chapter 7 analyzes patterns of paid work for two-parent families, from the early months of a child's life through late school. Chapter 8 summarizes the findings on leave, parents and paid work, related childhood education issues, and flexible workplaces and work practices. Chapters 1-7 contain references. (TM)

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Striking a Balance

Families, Work, and Early Childhood Education

Paul Callister and Valerie N. Podmore
with Judith Galtry and Theresa Sawicka

A joint project between

Paul Callister and Associates

New Zealand Council for Educational Research

New Zealand Council for Educational Research, Wellington 1995

A joint project between the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, Wellington, and Paul Callister & Associates, Paekakariki.

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ABSTRACT

This multi-disciplinary study examines the interface between work, families, and early childhood education, and includes an analysis of international trends and perspectives on parental leave. An extensive literature review examines these issues, and discusses "equality" and "difference" in women's and men's use of parental leave and participation in paid work. The first part of the review focuses on pertinent issues around the birth of a child and the early months of children's lives. Reference is made to parental-leave models from a range of countries including the United States, the Nordic countries with specific reference to Sweden, Australia, and New Zealand. The situation regarding fathers and parental leave is discussed; relevant literature on breastfeeding, maternal and child health, parental leave, and participation in paid work is reviewed; and the costs and benefits of parental leave are outlined.

In the second part of the review, there is an emphasis on issues related to parents in paid work who have infants and children aged under 5 years. The topic of early childhood education and parents in paid work is examined, drawing on international research.

Research and policy analyses on flexible forms of work and childcare are then reviewed, with an account of international findings on women and part-time paid work, a discussion on men and part-time work, and an outline of the costs and benefits of flexible forms of paid work.

Case studies of families' patterns of paid work and early childhood education and care arrangements are provided. The case studies describe in depth the experiences of 11 families drawn from an earlier larger-scale study. In the case studies, the meanings of the parents' descriptions of their participation in the paid work force, their early childhood education and care arrangements, and their experiences of parental leave are examined.

In addition, there is an analysis of census data on patterns of paid work for mothers in New Zealand 2-parent families, from the early months of a child's life through to the later period at school. International comparisons of parents' participation in paid work are included, with a focus on what could be seen as the two extremes of Sweden and the United States.

Some key research findings include:

- Policies at a national level on early childhood education and care, the labour market, income support, and health can have a significant impact on patterns of paid and unpaid work for men and women, particularly in the first months following the birth of a child.

- The emerging concept of "family friendly" workplaces has the potential to assist employees to balance paid work and family responsibilities more effectively. There is certainly scope for more workplaces to be made family friendly. However, there are specific limitations in implementing family friendly practices. Many workers appear to need policies developed at a national level to assist them in striking a good balance between paid work and family life.

- In many countries, including New Zealand, the design of parental-leave policies has been based around issues of pregnancy and childbirth, but has not explicitly taken into account the issue of breastfeeding. There is potential for conflict between factors which encourage or compel women to have minimal breaks from paid work following the birth of a child and health policies which encourage the uptake and continuation of breastfeeding. Unless provisions are made for paid leave, or significant reforms occur in the workplace, there can be conflict for women wanting to remain attached to the work force and to breastfeed. In particular, this is the case for women in low-income

occupations, which in New Zealand include a significant number of Maori and Pacific Island mothers.

- While in most societies there has been considerable focus on encouraging women to seek equality with men in paid work, there has been little focus on encouraging equality in unpaid work, and in particular childcare. Until recently, this has included little statutory support for fathers taking parental leave. However, the Nordic countries provide examples of how this policy balance can be altered.
- Labour-market flexibility appears to be driven primarily by employers' needs to become more internationally competitive. At times this now means that many employees are under increased pressure to work longer hours, creating potential conflicts between paid work and family responsibilities. But there are also examples of employee-driven flexibilities which lead to a better balance between paid work and family life. Recent studies suggest there is a need to reconceptualise part-time work, and for policies which balance hours of work and flexible options within workplaces.
- The importance of policies which promote the provision of high-quality early childhood education and care services is supported by the international research reviewed and also by the case studies.
- Parents in paid work are striving to balance their young children's needs and their own needs, which can lead to their using several early childhood education and care services concurrently.
- Parents are concerned that early childhood education and care arrangements meet the emotional needs of their children during the first years of life, and that 4-year-old children receive adequate cognitive and language stimulation. Language maintenance appears a priority for some parents with children at a kohanga reo or Pacific Island early childhood centre. Migrant needs, including young children's need to learn English as a second language and the difficulty of encountering stereotyping among peers in early childhood settings, are another concern among some families trying to balance their paid work and their children's early education and care.
- There has been a trend in the United States towards employer-provided childcare facilities, as a part of "family friendly" practices in workplaces. There is also some evidence of this trend within Australia and New Zealand. At the same time, other researchers and developmental psychologists have emphasised the importance of policies which promote the universal provision of high-quality education and care services.
- There is some evidence that the benefits to families, but in particular to women and children within low-income families, of paid parental leave combined with a well-developed childcare system, both publicly funded, outweigh the high costs to taxpayers. At the other end of the spectrum, the United States system of minimal government assistance to families of young children may simply mean that in some cases unsustainable costs are passed to individual families, with consequent poor outcomes in the labour market, health, and education.
- Theoretical models showing links between working life and family life focus on individuals. There appears scope for a redefinition of some models to include other family members.

There is some discussion of issues arising from this study, and questions are raised for further consideration. More work is proposed in order to analyse changing views on the interface of work, family, and early childhood education and care amongst key interest groups in the community.

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Paul Callister, Valerie Podmore,
Judith Galtry, and Theresa Sawicka

1995

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Paul Callister and Valerie N. Podmore

Background to the Study

This joint project between the New Zealand Council of Educational Research and Paul Callister & Associates has developed out of 2 strands of research. The first was an in-depth interview study of patterns of work and childcare arrangements among families with a 5-year-old child (Podmore, 1994b). The study traced, on a year-by-year basis, the experiences of 60 families from the child's birth until after school entry. The second strand was work examining changing patterns of families and work, both paid and unpaid, using primarily census data (Callister, 1993a). This latter work particularly focused on men's changing roles within paid work and childcare responsibilities. These individual projects left several areas of families' changing patterns of work and childcare relatively unexplored. The researchers therefore decided to investigate these issues jointly, drawing on a range of disciplines including anthropology, economics, educational and developmental psychology, nursing studies, and women's studies.

Why "Families, Work, and Education" are Important Issues

Changing Labour Markets

Since the early 1960s in most OECD countries there has been a substantial increase in the participation in paid work by mothers, particularly those with young children. In New Zealand women's overall participation in paid work accelerated between 1981 and 1986, then stalled through to 1991. During the 1976 to 1986 period the sharpest increase in paid employment occurred amongst women with children aged under 5 years. But between 1986 and 1991, women whose youngest child was under the age of 1 year were the only group to continue to increase (Statistics New Zealand, 1993).

The rapid increase in the proportion of mothers in paid work, particularly those with very young children, has been especially evident in the United States. In 1970, two-fifths of married mothers with a child aged under 6 years were not in the labour force, with only 9.6 percent working full time, year round. But by 1992 only one-fifth were not in paid work, and the proportion working full time and year round had increased to 30.6 percent (Hayghe & Bianchi, 1994). By 1988 more than half of all married mothers with children aged under 1 year were in the labour force. Klerman and Leibowitz (1994) show that in the late 1980s nearly 10 percent of women were back in paid work within a week of the birth of a child, over a third returned to paid work within 3 months of childbirth, and more than 40 percent were back in the work force within 4 months after the birth.

A wide variety of reasons have been put forward to explain the increase in mothers' participation in paid work. There are both "push" and "pull" factors.

The "push" factors include:

- More effective means of contraception and liberal abortion legislation.

- Increasing participation in higher education by women.
- A decline in family size, and a trend towards later parenthood. These mean that women have a chance to build up a career before having a child.
- Less stability within marriage, encouraging women to become more firmly attached to the labour market. This incudes increasing sole parenthood.
- A decline in male earnings or loss of earnings through unemployment in some 2-parent families.
- An increasing gap between those with high and low levels of human capital, and high levels of unemployment. This increases the cost, and risk, of time out of the labour force.
- The high financial costs of having children.
- Proliferation of domestic labour-saving devices.
- A shift away from familialism towards consumerism.
- The growth of feminism as an ideology encouraging female economic independence and equality.
- The provision of subsidised childcare in some countries.

The "pull" factors include:

- In some countries labour shortages have initially brought women into paid work, often on a part-time basis.
- Deindustrialisation and the growth of service industries, which have included many occupations traditionally undertaken by women. In part this is due to the "professionalisation" of some household work, with the work now being undertaken by women on a paid basis.
- As more women move into paid work this creates further demand for "professional" housework services, such as fast food.
- Expansion of the public sector.

While many women are choosing to be in paid work when their children are young, for others this is clearly necessary in order to maintain family incomes. According to the *OECD Job Study* (1994), wages as a share of national income generally fell back to, or even below at times, their early 1970 levels in most OECD countries. At the same time as an overall relative decline in wages, there were contrasting trends in the dispersion of wages between low- and high-skilled workers. In the English-speaking countries, wage differentials widened over the 1980s, but in continental Europe wage differentials were broadly unchanged or increased only slightly after narrowing in earlier decades. The OECD study also notes that in Australia, Canada, and the United States there were actual falls of real wages for low-skilled male workers. Schor (1991) suggests that in America parents in many low-income families are having to work long hours, including minimising time off paid work for holidays or time off after having a baby, in order to maintain their standard of living.

However, in New Zealand, as in many other OECD countries, there is major diversity within overall trends. For example, the employment trends of partnered and sole mothers have diverged markedly over the past 15 years. While the proportion of sole mothers has increased since 1976, there has been a steady decline in their participation in paid work. There has also been a small growth in sole fathers over the same period, but again their participation in paid work has declined (Statistics New Zealand, 1993).

In addition, there has been a general increase in male unemployment over the last decade which has removed many fathers in 2-parent families from the paid work force. There has also been an increase in male "underemployment" through men, at times, being forced into part-time work (Callister, 1993b).

Within New Zealand, as in many other countries, interaction between these various trends has led to a new diversity of families and patterns of work. There has been a significant growth in families headed by a sole parent who is not in paid work. In 2-parent families, there has been an increase in 2-income families including those in which both parents work full time although, in general, these families are more often characterised by the mother's involvement in part-time work when the children are young. Secondly, there has been a steady growth in 2-parent families where neither parent is in paid work. In addition, there has also been a small increase in families where the mother is the sole paid worker or where the father works part time. Over all, these changes have led to a substantial decline in families where the father is the sole income earner (Statistics New Zealand, 1994).

More mothers have become attached to the labour market, and will spend much of their working lives outside the home. There remains considerable debate as to what is best for themselves, their children, their wider family, and society as a whole in terms of the care of children. However, with the changing roles of women in paid work, and with men becoming less attached to the labour market, debates around parental leave, childcare, and "family-friendly" workplaces are now becoming just as relevant to men as they are to women. Equality between women and men in paid work can no longer be explored without raising issues of equality in unpaid work.

While all these debates are important for individual parents, it is not just a small group in society who are affected. In New Zealand in 1991 nearly 190,000 parents with children under 5 years of age were in the paid work force. This represents 13.5 percent of the total paid work force. In addition, during 1991 almost 281,000 parents with children between 5 and 15 years of age were in the paid work force, representing 20 percent of those in paid work. Because of the younger age structure of Maori and Pacific Island populations, the issues are particularly relevant to these groups. Potentially many of these parents will face a daily conflict between work and family, while a further group, who are mostly women, have either decided that the tension is not easily resolved and have remained outside paid work, cannot find paid work, or have made a conscious choice to have a period of time out of the paid work force.

Early Childhood Education and Care

It has been evident for some time that having access to childcare is one factor affecting women's participation in the paid work force. The importance of the interface between the early childhood care and education services, families, and the labour market is supported by a range of research documents. These include reports from the Families and Work Institute in the United States which show that children, parents, workplaces, and society all benefit from high-quality childcare (Friedman & Galinsky, 1992; Galinsky & Friedman, 1993).

Numerous research studies, and several comprehensive research reviews, have demonstrated that high-quality care and education has positive outcomes for children and other members of their families (e.g., Ochiltree, 1994; Podmore, 1993, 1994a; Wylie, 1994). International and New Zealand research has also shown that the availability of high-quality childcare is an important factor which influences young children's development. Podmore (1994b) found in the study *Employment and Childcare Arrangements Among Families* that accessing high-quality, affordable, early childhood education and care arrangements was an issue for some families with young children. These findings justify the inclusive reviewing of, and further in-depth research on, the interconnected issues of families, work, and early childhood education and care.

Scope of the Report

Content of the Report

This report includes research on several interrelated topics concerned with families, work, and early childhood education. The report is divided into 4 major sections:

- a review of the literature,
- qualitative case studies of New Zealand families,
- a quantitative analysis of patterns of paid work among New Zealand families, and
- a summary of issues arising from the research.

Chapters 2 to 5 provide an extensive review of relevant literature. This review examines international research on the work, family, and early childhood education interface. Particular attention is placed on the early months of children's lives. The review includes research and policy documents from North America, the European community, Australia, the Nordic Countries, and New Zealand. However, the main focus is on countries which have higher rates of participation in paid work than New Zealand. According to Statistics New Zealand, the number of women in the 15 to 64 age group who were in paid work in New Zealand stood at 63.8 percent in 1990. Comparative figures from the OECD show that for the same year the figure for Sweden was 83.5 percent, Finland 72.9 percent, Norway 72.6 percent, the United States 69.9 percent, Canada 69 percent, and the United Kingdom 68.4 percent. These countries are quite diverse in terms of labour-market philosophies and legislation, their approaches to the provision of childcare, their approaches to equality within paid and unpaid work, their promotion and uptake of breastfeeding, and they are not homogeneous in terms of size or base of their economies. Therefore they provide an interesting and diverse source of information on ways to achieve, in some cases, very high paid-work participation rates by women. They also provide a range of examples of models of work/family/early childhood education interfaces, and also of parental-leave policies and practices (Hyde & Essex, 1991). However, it is worth noting that, while the experiences of a range of countries is drawn upon, much of the literature, particularly in the area of "family friendly" workplaces, comes from the United States.

Chapter 6 focuses on case studies of employment and childcare arrangements among New Zealand families. This chapter describes in depth the experiences of 11 families from the study *Employment and Childcare Arrangements Among Families,* and examines the meanings of the participants' descriptions of their participation in the paid work force, their early childhood education and care arrangements, and their experiences of parental leave.

Chapter 7 provides an analysis of patterns of paid work for New Zealand 2-parent families, from the early months of a child's life through to the later period at school and includes some international comparisons of parents' participation in paid work. The international comparative approach evident in the literature review carries through to this chapter on patterns of paid work for parents. However, in this section the countries used for comparative purposes are narrowed down to what could be seen as the 2 extremes of Sweden and the United States.

Chapter 8 outlines issues arising from this study which warrant further discussion. It is planned that stakeholder groups will be consulted about these issues.

Definitions of Families and Work

The concept of families is complex, and the definition of families has been a widely debated issue internationally and within New Zealand. Johnson (1993), for example, states that a number of government-sponsored studies in the United States are informing policy makers about changing demographics. These changes include not only the increases in women's work-force participation and the number of dual-earning families, but also the increases in the numbers of diverse types of families. Examples of different types of families cited by Johnson are: "blended families, step families, single parent families, two and three generation families, families that live hundreds of miles apart as well as those that live together" (Johnson, 1993, p. 4).

In New Zealand, researchers have commented consistently on the diversity of family organisation and families' characteristics (Cairns, 1991; Hyman, 1995; Koopman-Boyden, 1991; Meade & Rosemergy, 1986; Podmore, 1994b). Research among families in the Wellington region by Meade and Rosemergy (1986) found a range of 2-parent, 1-parent, and extended families of different sizes. Cairns's (1991) paper highlights the importance of including members of the extended family in family research and policy making. Hyman contends that diversity of family forms, households, and ways of living has received negligible acknowledgment: "sole parents are ignored or criticised as inferior, and marriage and heterosexuality are seen as the only desirable site for the raising of children" (Hyman, 1995, p.120).

One restriction in the present report is that the concept of families is generally confined to families which include, or are about to include, 1 or more infants and/or young children. The literature reviewed in chapters 2 to 5 includes studies of 1-parent and 2-parent families. Only a few of the studies reviewed have moved beyond the concept of nuclear families.

Chapter 6 focuses on families where there is a child who has commenced primary school. Within these parameters, a relatively inclusive definition of families is applied. In that chapter, the concept of families is confined to situations where a 5-year-old child was in residence in 1993 to 1994. Each family included 1 or more parents or guardians, and among those who took part there were 2-parent families, mother-only families, a father-only family, blended families, and either 2-generation or 3-generation families.

In chapter 7, when New Zealand census data are discussed, families are derived using Statistics New Zealand definitions. In the 1991 census, a family was defined as a couple, either from a legal or a de facto marriage, with or without children who usually live in the same household. A household was defined as a group of people, whether related or not, who live together and who normally eat at least one meal together daily or at least share the same cooking facilities. This definition of the family relies on two kinds of relationship; the presence of a heterosexual couple and/or a parent-child relationship. In addition the definition only covers people who live in private dwellings. In chapter 7, any concept of the family which includes more than one household is excluded.

There are also some complexities concerning definitions of work. Work can be carried out on both a paid and an unpaid basis, within the home and out in the community. This report places some emphasis on the interlinkages between unpaid work carried out mainly in the home and paid work which usually takes place outside the home.

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CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Valerie N. Podmore and Paul Callister

Focus of the Review

The next 4 chapters provide a review of international literature on topics pertaining to the work, family, and early childhood education interface. The focus is on the first 5 years of children's lives, and in chapter 3, particular attention is placed on the early months of life. The review includes research and policy documents from North America, the European community, Australia, the Nordic Countries, and New Zealand.

The range of databases searched for research information included: ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center); the British, Australian, and Canadian Education Indexes; the social science, business management, and medical and nursing databases; Dissertation Abstracts; and several New Zealand databases. Much of the information yielded from several of these databases had a predominantly North American focus, and therefore, alternative information sources were included. The review also draws upon recent OECD literature in this area. The authors consulted researchers and policy analysts working in related areas. In addition to the formal literature searches, research and policy information gathered from Valerie Podmore's 1992 study leave visits in Britain, Sweden, and Denmark are included in the review. The researchers linked into: work at the Work/Family Institute in the United States; the Stockholm Institute of Education and the Swedish Centre for Working Life in Stockholm; studies from the European Commission Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities; and recent research at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

The intention of the review was to document and discuss research literature and policy documents related to labour-market flexibility, provision of early childhood care and education, and parental-leave policies. Some key issues examined include:

- The arguments for and against the provision of parental leave, including paid parental leave.
- International models of parental leave, the provisions of statutory parental-leave policies, and the costs and benefits of parental leave.
- The philosophies behind a push by some European countries to encourage an equal use of parental leave by fathers and mothers and the effect of any policies directed at this goal.
- The conflicts between paid work for women (and childcare for men) and breastfeeding, and how possible conflicts can be minimised.
- The demand for access to high-quality early childhood education and care for parents in paid work who have children aged under 5 years, and the use of multiple childcare arrangements by young children and families.
- Emerging arguments for and against employer-provided childcare.
- The demand for, and the use of, forms of flexible work by both mothers and fathers to allow

time off with children while working, such as part-time work, flexible time, job shares, and working at home.

- The link between employee-driven labour-market flexibility which helps strike a balance between work and family, and productivity of enterprises.

Theories and Models of Families, Work, and Education

Ecological Approaches

Theoretical underpinnings of this review include an ecological perspective on the work-family interface. As Podmore (1994b) points out, some studies investigating parental labour-force participation and childcare policies and arrangements have been developed within an ecological framework, and several Swedish authors advocate interpreting research findings on employment and childcare arrangements and outcomes within their appropriate contexts (e.g., Andersson, 1992; Gunnarsson, personal communication; Sandqvist, 1987). Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, which was developed in the United States during the 1970s and elaborated during the 1980s, has had an impact on a variety of studies of parental labour-force participation and childcare. Examples include Gunnarsson's (1993) and Andersson's (1992) emphasis on the social, political, and economic context of their research on childcare, and Sandqvist's (1987) reference to social contexts in her work on fathers and childcare responsibilities. Ecological approaches have influenced this review, in that the research findings tend to be interpreted within their relevant historical, economic, sociocultural, and political contexts. The review also includes some brief discussion on the relevance of the theoretical approaches within the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Models of Interlinkages Among Work, Families, and Organisations

Zedeck and Mosier (1990), researchers in the United States who examined issues related to balancing employment and family roles, have summarised 5 of the main theoretical models of paid work and home life. These are:

- *spillover theory*, which assumes a similarity between events in a work and in a family environment;
- *compensation theory*, which proposes an inverse association between work and family, leading people to compensate for components missing in the work setting by participation in non-work activities or the family environment;
- *segmentation theory*, which asserts the distinctiveness of work and family environments by proposing that the world of work is impersonal, competitive, and instrumental whereas the family is affective, intimate, and expressive;
- *instrumental theory*, which emphasises that each environment is a means to support the other;
- *conflict theory*, which views work and family roles as being in conflict and proposes that there is a need for sacrifice in one environment to achieve success or satisfaction in the other.

As Zedeck and Mosier point out, all 5 models emphasise individuals rather than family groups. Over all, this emphasis would limit the usefulness of the models in explaining the experiences within families/whanau. Research and bibliographies compiled within New Zealand do show, though, that these models, and perhaps most notably the spillover and conflict ones, have generated a range of recent studies on the work-family interface (e.g., Adams, Brown, Gain, Jensen, & Williamson, 1994; Tudhope, 1994).

Zedeck (1992) subsequently included 2 further theoretical models, derived from Morf's (1989) work. These are:

- a *congruence model*, which proposes that the spheres of work and life are linked by aspects of the individual's personality. This third factor of personality variables in turn influences a person's response to both work and life spheres;
- *integrative theory*, or an *identity model*, which postulates that work and family are so closely fused that they are inseparable.

Morf (1989), who has examined the gap between the spheres of work and life, contends that "so-called *congruence models*" from economics and education have tended to concentrate "exclusively on the fit between a worker's abilities and the ability requirements of a job" (p. 43). Consequently Morf has described a congruence model that is non-causal and more clearly connected to a psychological view of congruence. However, he focuses entirely on the overall disposition of the individual by giving this example: "A person characterized by a happy-go-lucky temperament may experience little stress and much enjoyment both on the job and at home" (p. 129). Morf describes a "noncausal" *identity* model which he sees as an extreme form of congruence, where at the micro level, for many artists, writers, and researchers "personal dispositions and the nature of the job may interact and generate total commitment to activities that cannot be clearly separated into work and life activities" (p.129). He also proposes several options for reintegrating work and life.

It appears that these 2 additional models may contribute to greater understanding of some individuals' experiences, but they, too, need some reinterpretation to be applied within family groups. Zedeck (1992) himself points out that:

> As previously suggested, there are a number of problems with the use of both the 'work' and 'family' variables as means by which to understand the relationship between the employing organization and the family. First, many of the variables are gross variables that ignore processes or the quality of the experience; they do not capture the relationship of the individual to the environment. (p. 14)

Zedeck notes that studies of families, work, and organisations have been carried out by researchers from a range of disciplines who report their findings without considering one another's perspectives, and he has therefore called for a more integrated approach across academic disciplines. He recommends that more attention be focused on the complex, reciprocal nature of the connections between work and family, that an emphasis could be placed on couples or family units rather than on individuals, that comprehensive definitions of work, family, and organisation are needed, and that the meanings of work should be examined.

Public *Versus* Private Domains

A further perspective related to work and family domains is the concept of:

- *public and private spheres.*

These spheres are often physically separated, but Kanter (1977) suggests that for Western men and women, the separation of workplace and home is a relatively new phenomenon, with firstly men's work taking them out of the home and more recently women and children working away from the home.

Several researchers have discussed the problematic assumption that the domains of work and family are separate, gender-defined, and either public or private (e.g., Burstein, Bricher, & Einwohner, 1995; Cox & James, 1987; Ferree, 1990; Lewis, 1992; Tudhope, 1994). Ferree (1990), for example, argues that the concept of separateness (and specifically, the public *versus* private dichotomy) is not appropriate. This type of separation supports the idea that women have a distinct and complementary role.

In the United States, a variety of contrasting "visions" of work, family, and gender issues has developed. Burstein *et al.* (1995) explain how these conflicting visions have led to the development of several quite different policy packages. They describe 3 different models:

- a *winnowing* model, where a large number of policy options is gradually reduced or "winnowed" to a few policies or a single policy;
- an *elaboration* model where, in contrast, a small number of policy alternatives gradually grows;
- and a *short list* model, where fewer policy options are simultaneously on the agenda.

Burstein *et al.* (1995) identify 3 "packages" for the policy alternatives associated with work, family, and gender:

1. A *separate spheres* package, which places women in the private sphere of the home, focused on childrearing and domestic work, and locates men in the public sphere of paid work. Underlying this model is the assumption that family matters are irrelevant to employers and employees, and that women in paid work are an anomaly.
2. An *equal opportunity* package, which supports equal participation and conditions for women in the public sphere, but does not challenge the public *versus* private split.
3. A *work-family accommodation* package, which "narrows the separation between family and paid work" (p. 69). The emphasis is on having employers provide workplace practices and amenities which accommodate the needs of families and promote equal status for women.

Burstein *et al.* (1995) recommend that the rationale for new policy packages, and the reasons why support for the existing packages fluctuates, should be analysed. They also contend that, if the United States has been confined to these 3 packages, Congress has been operating on a short-list model.

Lewis (1992), who tracked the long history in Britain of men dominating the public/work sphere while women prevailed in the private/home sphere, similarly questions "the myth" of separate worlds, and notes that "government and industry are being coerced into acknowledging the interrelationships between the two domains" (p. 425). However, Lewis also proposes that the rather uneven implementation of "family friendly" policies is insufficient in itself to change the gender role restrictions of public-private separateness. She comments that ideological changes, brought about through policy changes in countries such as Sweden, have effected more changes in gender-related attitudes and behaviour.

In New Zealand, Cox and James (1987) also suggest that if women are to have equal status with men, the concept of separation needs to be challenged. They suggest 4 alternatives. The first 2 are:

- allowing women to enter the public sphere;
- rethinking and remaking the private sphere (p.16).

According to Cox and James, both these suggestions are based on the idea that the private and public worlds are unalterable and accepted as basic divisions in social life. The second 2 alternatives are:

- abolition of the private sphere;
- challenging the divisions between the public and the private spheres (p.16).

In terms of rethinking and remaking the private sphere, a number of writers, such as Waring (1988) and McKinlay (1992), argue that unpaid work, including childcare at home, needs to be made more visible and to be seen as just as valuable a contribution to society as paid work outside the home. Strategies for this include undertaking surveys of unpaid work and entering such work into the national accounting framework.

Tudhope (1994), who was examining aspects of the work and family interface within New Zealand when the present study was in progress, acknowledges some of the complexities inherent in the concept of "family" and outlines functionalist, Marxist, and feminist theories on families. Her thesis is a useful resource for readers requiring more detailed background information on models of the relationship between paid work and home life. Tudhope argues that the "public/private" debate underlies the justification of "family friendly" work policies, and she makes clear connections between capitalism, patriarchy, and women's difficulties when re-entering the public sphere of paid work.

Feminist Theories

The literature in this review is interpreted against a backdrop of feminist theory, and in particular the ideology of liberal feminism (e.g., Eisenstein, 1981). Liberal feminism has emphasised women's equality of opportunity with men in the public world, with specific stress on paid work. Within this overall philosophy there are a number of ideas which potentially influence behaviour in areas such as parental leave, breastfeeding, and who is responsible for childcare. These include an accepted separation of public and private spheres; a separation and elevation of mind over body, and with it a denigration of nurturing and domestic activities; and a view that equality is synonymous with "sameness" and therefore potentially repressing or negating all obvious "difference" (Scott, 1988; Jaggar, 1988; Rantalaiho, 1993). In addition, the review draws on other strands of feminism, in particular cultural feminism, which upholds and celebrates women's differences based on biology (Varies, 1992). Reference is also made to some ideas and theories from the small, but emerging, area of "men's studies" (Kimmel, 1987). The next chapter of the literature review provides a detailed discussion of equality and difference issues in relation to breastfeeding and parental leave.

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CHAPTER 3

BIRTH AND THE EARLY MONTHS: PARENTAL LEAVE AND PAID WORK

Judith Galtry and Paul Callister

This section of the literature review focuses on the period of time around the birth of a child and subsequent care by its parents in the early months of its life, as well as parental involvement in paid work. The section on mothers and breastfeeding was written by Judith Galtry; the section on men and parental leave by Paul Callister.

"Equality" and "Difference"

> The pay of women is more likely to rise, relative to that of men, the more their working lives resemble those of men. Some women will always prefer to lead different lives. They will usually find that the cost of being different is lower earning power. ("The War Between the Sexes," 1994)

All sections of the literature review have been developed with reference to a range of models of work, family, and education. However, the birth of a child and the associated development of parental-leave policies raise some particularly difficult debates around models of "equality" and "difference" between women and men both in paid and unpaid work.[1]

Despite changes in the labour market it is clear from time-use surveys throughout the world that most fathers still spend substantially less time than mothers with their children, especially when the children are very young but also throughout their years at school. The surveys also show that while mothers have increasingly moved into paid work, over all in paid work they still spend less time than do fathers (Bittman, 1991; Gershuny & Robinson, 1988; Juster & Stafford, 1991).

Equality with men in paid work, in terms of earnings, hours of work, and opportunities for promotion has long been a prime concern of many women. The issue of childcare, and housework, has been a key part of this debate and one strategy to lessen the load for women has been to argue for "professionalising" the work. Issues concerning the provision of high-quality, affordable childcare represent a central part of this report, but there are further questions as to when this professional care should commence relative to parental care, and what is the ideal balance between professional care of children and parental care. In addition, professionalisation itself raises some further difficult issues of equality and difference.[2]

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[1] It is beyond the scope of this report to explore in any detail the philosophical underpinnings and complexities inherent in the concept of "equality". But according to Jaggar (1988, p. 7), the concept of "equality" is "essentially contested" and subject to "interminable disagreement" within various political philosophies, including those of feminism (*see* Heitlinger (1993) for discussion about conceptions of equality in terms of opportunity or outcome). Vogel (1993, p. 163) also notes: "The opposition that is subject of the debate is variously named equality versus difference and sameness versus difference. Embedded in this terminological instability are difficult theoretical issues, in particular the conflation of sameness with equality, and the relationship of equality to notions of fairness and justice." Also problematic is the notion of "difference", which tends to suggest that male biology is the norm against which female biology is perceived as "in some sense 'deviant' " (Heitlinger, 1987, p. 55).

However, arguments have also, at times, been put forward for men lessening their focus on paid work and increasing their involvement in childcare within the home. For example, some feminists have argued that women will always be constrained in the public sphere if men are not taking an equal share of work within the private sphere (Bernard, 1975; Folbre, 1994; Rantalaiho, 1993; Sandqvist, 1992). Similarly, Bittman (1991), in the Australian context, and Haas (1990), commenting on Sweden, argue that equalising parents' employment opportunities might be just as likely to come about through a lowering of men's involvement in the labour market as through the raising of women's involvement. From within psychology and sociology, Dinnerstein (1977) and Chodorow (1978), although differing in their analyses of the underlying reasons, have put forward theories that the oppression of women originates in the female monopoly on mothering. To counter this, they argue for the concept of dual parenting whereby men share equally in the rearing and caring of infants. A number of psychologists and anthropologists also suggest that men will not only gain emotionally from a greater involvement in their child's upbringing but they will also make better decisions in the public sphere with this new dimension to their being (Kitzinger, 1992; Smith, 1990; Snarey, 1993). In addition, there are studies which suggest that there may be positive gains for children from their fathers' greater involvement (Lamb, 1986; Pruett, 1987; Snarey, 1993).

On the other hand, however, there are those who question the ability of men to increase their involvement in childcare. For example, researchers such as Gilligan (1982) have put forward arguments that women are more capable of affiliation than men. Others are more age specific arguing that, in general, women are better with babies, and men with older children (Rossi, 1984). But other writers go further arguing that men, universally, have the potential for behaviour which is dangerous to women and children (Brownmiller, 1975; Dworkin, 1987).

A review of all the theories, from a wide range of disciplines, regarding the current gender division of labour in paid and unpaid work, the type of work carried out by women and men within the two spheres, and the relative "rewards" given for various kinds of work is beyond the scope of this report. Yet, concepts of equality and difference are often seen to be of fundamental importance to debates, and policy making, on issues of childcare, flexible forms of paid work and "family-friendly" workplaces and, in particular, the question of parental leave.

The issues of equality and difference focus on 3 potentially interrelated areas. The first centres on the indisputable biological differences between women and men, that is pregnancy and birth.[3]

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[2] A detailed discussion of the issue of men in paid childcare work is beyond the scope of this study but there are some important issues needing to be explored. In particular, occupational segregation by gender within professional childcare services throughout the world is extreme. For example, in a 1994 study of New Zealand childcare centres men represented a mere 0.5 percent of the work force, and half of these men left in the year of the study (Smith, 1995). In addition, in a 1990 European Commission Network on Childcare seminar exploring issues of men's involvement in childcare, it was argued that an important parallel issue to involving men in more unpaid childcare is to get more men into professional childcare services (European Commission, 1990).

[3] Advancing technology is, however, likely to challenge even this difference. In addition, existing technologies such as in vitro fertilisation already raise some interesting issues. Rothman (1989) discusses the way in which new reproductive technologies allow women to be "fathers". As well as employing "other" women to care for their children, "female" fathers can now use "other" women to bear children from their "seed". Professionalised childcare, according to Rothman, can therefore potentially begin at conception.

Secondly, there is the issue of breastfeeding, which clearly has a biological basis, but is also an activity that is substantially culturally constructed. And, finally, there are issues of nurturing, bonding, and on-going care of children, which make the debate far more complex and, as discussed, unable to be adequately addressed in this review.

Feminist theorising, although characterised by various, and sometimes conflicting, models has had a key influence on thinking around these issues. However, in different countries varying approaches have been taken towards achieving equality for women.

Issues of equality and difference are briefly explored in 3 broad geographic areas. Firstly, debates about these concepts and their implications in the United States are examined. This is followed by an examination of European policies and debates, with a particular focus on Sweden. Finally, the issue is looked at in a New Zealand context.

The United States

In the United States, discussions of parental leave have led to particularly vigorous debates over the concepts of equality and difference, with much of the debate occurring within a legal setting. However, these debates have not only been discussed in the academic literature but also in popular writings so the influence of the ideas has tended to spread well beyond the geographic boundaries of the United States (*see,* for example Scott, 1988, and Vogel, 1993). In addition, companies from the United States are significant investors in New Zealand therefore such ideas about equality in "work" have, to some extent, infiltrated New Zealand workplaces. Many of these debates articulate ideas which, at times, have not been so explicitly expressed in other countries.

In the United States a central concern amongst feminists is that parental leave, and more specifically maternity leave, while potentially supporting women in paid work, can actually work against their achieving equality with men.[4] Trzcinski (1989) argues that the debates around parental leave can be divided into 2 issues: pregnancy and childbirth, and bonding with a new child. In addition, she suggests that attitudes and policies related to pregnancy and childbirth have passed through various stages in American history.

According to Trzcinski, the years between 1870 and 1970 were marked by a set of legal rights and duties that differed significantly for women and men. She notes that in the 1940s protective labour legislation began to take pregnancy into account. Some states prohibited employers from employing women before and after childbirth, while many states denied unemployment benefits to pregnant women or to women just after birth. Further, no laws existed to stop organisations from dismissing women because they became pregnant.

The late 1960s and 1970s, following the passing of the Civil Rights Act (1964), were marked by an intense focus on issues of discrimination, not only on racial grounds but also those of gender. In 1971 the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission decided that pregnancy and childbirth should be treated as temporary disabilities, in the same way as other short-term disabilities. Trzcinski argues that, historically, employers in the United States have not provided infant-care leave or other forms of family leave, although the concept of disabilities leave had been established for decades. Hence, the focus on pregnancy and childbirth as disabilities.[5] Trzcinski notes that during this period there were major debates in the courts as to whether discrimination based on pregnancy constituted sexual discrimination.

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[4] It is worth noting that this focus on formal equal rights with men in the public sphere is predominantly a "liberal feminist" conception which is by no means representative of the views of all feminists in the United States, or other industrialised nations.

In 1978 the Pregnancy Discrimination Act was passed as an amendment to the Civil Rights Act. It required employers and governments to treat disabilities arising from pregnancy or childbirth on terms as favourable as those extended to other disabilities. This met with vigorous debates within the courts.

Subsequently, a number of states attempted to bring in maternity-leave policies through state legislation and regulation. This led to the introduction into Congress of the Family and Medical Leave Bill. There was again very intense debate around the introduction of this Bill, including, at one stage, a presidential veto, before its passing in 1993.

Trzcinski notes that some groups gave total support to mandated leave policies, some gave qualified support, and some were totally opposed to such policies. According to Trzcinski, much of the debate however centred upon whether to use a "separate treatment" or "equal treatment" approach. Trzcinski (1989) distinguishes between the 2 approaches taken toward leave for pregnancy and childbirth-related disabilities. These are:

> a. Separate Treatment Approach: Maternity leaves for disabilities, which provide a period of leave for pregnancy and child-birth related disabilities but not for other disabilities.
>
> b. Equal Treatment Approach: Temporary disability leaves (sometimes called medical leaves), which provide employees with leave to cover absences from work due to short-term temporary disabilities from sickness and accidents. (p. 10)

Many groups representing the interests of women, such as the National Organization for Women, the National Women's Political Caucus, and the American Civil Liberties Union, suggested that the adoption of parental-leave protection without medical leave would encourage discrimination against women of childbearing age (Trzcinski, 1989). This is discussed in detail in the section on the costs and benefits of parental leave.

In relation to the issue of nurturing leave Trzcinski, like most other American researchers, does not raise the issue of breastfeeding as an element of "difference". She claims that separate and equal treatment approaches can apply to both disabilities and nurturing leave. She also notes that while the provision of infant-care leave to mothers, but not fathers, represents separate treatment, some analysts have suggested that an equal-treatment approach to nurturing leave involves more than equal access to leave for women and men. Trzcinski also argues that the pure equal-treatment approach must encompass a wide range of caregiving needs and relationships. The two approaches outlined are as follows:

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[5] The treatment of pregnancy and childbirth as disabilities is also indicative of the extent to which these processes are "medicalised" in the United States (Bickel, 1991).

a. Separate Treatment Approach: Parental leave

   - Infant care leaves, which provides leaves to either parent to care for newborn or newly adopted children.

   - Infant care leaves and leaves to care for sick children.

b. Equal Treatment Approach: Family leaves, which provide leave for caring for newborn or newly adopted children, sick children, and other ailing relatives such as elderly parents (p. 11).

The Family and Medical Leave Bill was enacted in 1993. This Act focuses on the development of children and the family unit, including the provision of a gender-neutral leave programme (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1995). The Ministry of Women's Affairs suggests that the United States parental-leave provisions have moved away from a "protection" model toward an "equity-based" model. During this transition there was a combination of equity promotion within a "disability" framework. They suggest that each of these models has affected state legislation.

Burnstein *et al.* (1995) argue that American thinking is moving from a focus on "difference", through to a new vision of "equality".[6] They argue that employers are increasingly required to accommodate family needs, and provide equal benefits to women and men, promoting the belief that childcare and other family responsibilities are the concern of both. While this discourse stresses "sameness", the male norm moves closer to that of women with dual paid-work and family responsibilities. The authors argue that the work-family accommodation requires institutional change in relation to women's employment opportunities and men's roles, as well as the restructuring of economic organisations.

Vogel (1993) argues, however, that another major dimension to the equality and difference debate, that of race and class, is often overlooked. She suggests that in the United States maternity policy has been constructed with two tiers. According to Vogel, this policy portrays women of European origin as essentially different, and therefore deserving of special treatment while excluding, for the most part, black, Asian, Chicana, and other women of colour.

Vogel contends (1993, p. 39) that 4 principles have historically guided the framing of this implicit policy which together "prescribe the proper articulation of motherhood, family and employment." For white mothers these are:

- Motherhood is to be regarded as morally and practically incompatible with labor-force participation. Because most women are or will become, mothers, employers can assume women workers to be only temporarily in the workforce.

- Pregnancy is to be given a special status in the workplace as a condition that is simultaneously normal and unique. The fact that pregnancy is a normal condition justifies denying pregnant workers benefits. However expensive and disabling pregnancy may be, it is not a sickness and

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[6] *See* chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of Burnstein *et al.* (1995).

> employers need not include pregnancy-related problems in their health and disability plans. The fact that pregnancy is unique justifies employment policies treating pregnant workers differently than other workers.
>
> - Mothers and fathers are to be assigned distinct family responsibilities; the sexual division of parental duties generates their respective involvement in paid employment. Mothers are to make a full-time commitment to raising children and maintaining the heterosexual family household. Fathers are to bear the financial costs of child rearing and family life by being employed. The boundary between paid work and family is regarded as fixed, defining two distinct spheres of activity.
>
> - Maternity and child rearing are to be considered the private responsibility of individual family members. The state should not provide benefits in support of family life, nor should it directly intervene. (p. 40)

But, Vogel (1993) suggests that for black, Asian, Chicana, and other women workers of colour, the principles governing maternity policy are not the same. Instead

> - Motherhood is to be regarded as irrelevant to employment status. If a woman of color holds a job, her employer can expect her to place the job's requirements ahead of the needs of her own family.
>
> - Pregnancy is to receive no special status in the workplace. Pregnant workers who cannot do their work should get no special protection.
>
> - Although mothers and fathers are presumed to have different family responsibilities, it is normal for mothers to participate in the financial support of the family.
>
> - Maternity and child rearing are, in general, to be considered the responsibility of individual family members. However, the state may, at its discretion, intervene. (p. 41)

It is Vogel's contention that where female-specific protection has been made available to women in paid work in America such support has not been accessible to most African-American and other women workers of colour. She suggests that there are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, agriculture and domestic service, which for most of the last century have provided most jobs for women of colour, have generally been exempt from regulation. Secondly, businesses that employ women workers of colour are often below the minimum size for statutory cover. Finally, officials often overlook situations where employers with large numbers of low-wage workers, particularly of colour, do not comply with regulations.

Issues of equality and difference in relation to parental leave have not only been argued within the context of public policy in the United States, but have also been addressed within management literature focusing on individual corporations. In an article first published in 1989 Schwartz (1994) argued that the cost of employing women in management is greater than the cost of employing men. She noted that in the United States 90 percent of executive men but only 35 percent of executive women have children by the age of 40, and that this difference is one indication of the difficulties experienced by women who are trying to combine family and paid-work responsibilities. According to Schwartz, corporations cannot avoid the difference between women and men in terms of pregnancy and childbirth, and there is a need, therefore, for a career development track for women who want to combine motherhood and paid employment. She argued that this would be good for both women and corporations as the latter need to decide which women will be single-minded about their "careers", and therefore less likely to have children. Schwartz's article created intense debate in the popular media and the management literature, and the childbearing option quickly became known as the "Mommy Track".

Nichols (1994), however, argued that this schema was fundamentally problematic. For instance, few women can tell in their early 20s that they plan to have children in their mid-thirties. In addition, it is probably illegal to refuse women, on the grounds of "difference", the same kinds of training, promotions, and opportunities to relocate that are offered to men. Finally, asked Nichols, why should there not also be a "Daddy Track"?

The European Community

In the European community, parental-leave legislation explicitly focuses on different roles for women and men around pregnancy and childbirth (European Commission, 1994). Four types of leave are discussed however - maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, and leave for family reasons.

According to the European Commission (1994), maternity leave is "intended to protect the mother and unborn infant in the last weeks of pregnancy and during childbirth; to allow the full recovery of the mother following childbirth, and to accommodate breast feeding of the infant, at least in the early and most critical stages of the infant's life. It is essentially a health and welfare measure, concerned with the wellbeing of the mother and infant." (p. 4)

The Commission (1994, pp. 4-5) defines paternity leave as a period of leave to be taken by fathers at, or near, the time of childbirth. According to the Commission, this type of leave has a number of purposes. It enables fathers to be present at the birth; to have time with their newborn baby; to have time with their partners and offer support; and also to be the sole or main care for other children and the home.

The Commission suggests that the philosophy of parental leave developed in the early 1980s was based around equal opportunities in paid work, but with the concern that any legislation did not marginalise women. In general, parental-leave policies were seen as part of a range of overall policies about families and work. In the 1990s, however, there has been more discussion about maternity leave, mainly focused on issues of the health and safety of pregnant workers and of those who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.

Many of the EC parental-leave policies are based on the concept of "difference". Most EC countries offer a general right to maternity leave, paid at a high proportion of earnings. A number of countries offer additional entitlements to mothers who have returned to paid work, allowing to them to take short breaks during the day from their jobs during the first 9 to 12 months after giving birth (European Commission, 1994, p. 13). In Portugal and France these are for breastfeeding. In Italy, all mothers in full-time employment have the right to 2 daily, 1-hour breaks. These breaks can be taken together so that mothers can actually reduce their working day. Spain has a similar, although less generous, system. Finally, in Greece, mothers are entitled to a 1-hour break per day for 12 months after ending maternity leave (increased to 24 if working in the public sector).

In contrast, only 4 EC countries give fathers an entitlement to paternity leave, although in Belgium, France, and Spain the leave period is only 3 to 5 days (European Commission, 1994, p. 13).

Research in Germany on parental-leave policies suggests that, depending on how leave provisions are designed, they can lead to a reinforcement of traditional roles within a family, rather than encouraging equitable sharing of family and work responsibilities (Schiersmann, 1991). Vogel (1993) also argues that:

> . . . in most European countries, a maternalist ideology has been the justification for gender-specific policies that purport to assist women yet simultaneously contribute to occupational sex-segregation and a secondary position for women in the labor market. But European maternity policies have provided a great deal of practical help to women workers, and they have always been embedded in universalistic social welfare packages that over the decades have been reasonably well enforced and even expanded. (p. 42)

The European Commission (1994, p. 37) argues that leave will only contribute to equality between women and men in paid and unpaid work when this is explicitly recognised as the purpose of the leave; when leave is structured in such a way as to achieve this objective; when complementary measures are in place, such as accessible childcare services; and when the effectiveness of leave is monitored, researched, and regularly reviewed.

Sweden

Sweden has had a long history of parental-leave policies, initially based on "difference". Further, Näsman and Falkenberg (1990, p. 5) record that at the beginning of the century more general legislation "often discriminated by gender with the official purpose of protecting women". As an example, they cite a 1909 law which prohibited women from working at night. Specifically in terms of parental-leave policies, Sundström (1993) reports that from 1938 Swedish women were entitled to a lump sum maternity benefit at childbirth (until 1974), supplemented by an additional benefit to the most needy women and children (until 1955). In addition, since 1939 Swedish women have been protected against dismissal from paid work on the grounds of marriage, pregnancy, or childbirth. Näsman and Falkenberg (1990) also report that at the beginning of the century a law was passed which gave mothers the right to take a daily break to breastfeed.

While in the United States there is a distinct boundary between public and private responsibility, successive Swedish governments have taken a much wider interest in economic and social issues, including decision making in individual households (Rapoport & Moss, 1990). Hewlett (1987) suggests that, unlike Americans, Swedish feminists have shown little support for changing social conditions by altering the thinking of individuals. She suggests that the American approach shifts responsibility away from society and on to the individual. Duncan (1994) also discusses this issue in terms of a "gender contract", or the idea that through debate and conflict "a social consensus is formed about what men and women are, think, expect and do" (p. 268) and suggests that "a movement away from classic male/female dichotomies of breadwinner/homemaker, public/private depends on state intervention to change female roles", but raises issues as to whether the state itself "remains patriarchal" (p. 267).

Hewlett (1987) suggests that Swedish feminists, in contrast to American feminists, in trying to reach a social consensus about achieving equality in paid work, believe that women need to be treated differently in the labour market to compensate for having to deal with issues of pregnancy and childbirth. She suggests that Swedish feminists have pushed for the development of systems to support them as both mothers and paid workers.

Moreover, in Sweden, in contrast to the United States, there has not only been an interest in equality between women and men, but also between all people in society. In 1968, the Swedish government presented a report to the United Nations Economic and Social Council arguing that role sharing in the family was a prerequisite for women's full participation in the economy, in politics, and in the trade union movement. However, Sandqvist (1992) argues that most Swedes saw it as unacceptable that women might only achieve equality in paid work by relying on low-paid domestic help to replace them in the home.

The Swedish Act of Equality, which is intended to promote equal rights between women and men at work, recognises that the attainment of this goal requires parallel changes in parenthood. According to Rapoport and Moss (1990), equality for men means taking responsibility for children in the same way as women, as well as having the same responsibility for physical and emotional work at home. In addition both parents should have equal rights to children. But, equality for women also means an ability to participate actively in paid work so "every individual should have a job paid sufficiently to enable her or him to earn a living" (Rapoport & Moss, 1990, p. 16). Yet, while pushing for equality in paid work and for state support of childcare, the Swedish government, through the design of its parental-leave and childcare policies, also clearly believes that children are best cared for in the home by their own parents in the first year of a child's life. As will be discussed in subsequent sections this philosophy creates some problems for achieving equality for women in paid work and men in unpaid work.

It is Duncan's contention (1994) that in Sweden there has been little change to male roles, while the female norm has moved nearer to the dominant "standard" male norm. He suggests that women in Sweden "can now have careers and become politicians, as well as being mothers and housewives" (p. 267). Inevitably however, according to Duncan, women remain in a weaker position in society and are particular reliant on the public sector for paid employment.

Therefore, while gender equality in paid and unpaid work is articulated as an aim in Sweden, "difference" around pregnancy and childbirth continues to be explicitly recognised, with some separate leave provisions for women and men. At the same time, however, extended parental leave, and other family supports are targeted on a gender-neutral basis.

New Zealand

Historically, there have been various strands within feminist thought in New Zealand, including those which have sought to uphold "difference", as well as those which have emphasised the importance of women achieving equality with men in terms of economic and social power. Olssen (1980) claims that a "consensus about the centrality of motherhood and domesticity", sometimes referred to as the "cult of domesticity" (p. 175), emerged in the latter part of last century and early part of this century. According to both Bunkle (1980) and Olssen (1980), these maternalist values, based on assumptions of women's innate and superior psychological and spiritual "differences" from men which rendered them uniquely suited to nurturing and the life of the home, were upheld not only by prominent doctors and educationists but also by various women's organisations of the period. This had the effect of promoting and re-evaluating motherhood and the domestic sphere at the expense, however, of women's greater economic and social mobility (Bunkle, 1980; James & Saville-Smith, 1989; Olssen, 1980).

Although this maternalist ideology legitimating separate spheres for women and men based on "difference" was radically challenged by the women's movement of the 1970s with its emphasis on women's equality in the public sphere, the effects of the ideal linger. According to Coney (1993), the ideology of separate roles has had 3 major effects on women in the workplace. Firstly, the idea that women's involvement in paid employment represents merely a "brief interlude" before marriage has "justified lower pay rates and discrimination in promotion and access to training". Secondly, the idea of "women's work" and "men's work" has meant that women have been occupationally segregated to a large degree in those jobs which approximate their mothering role characterised by "low status, low pay and unequal pay rates determined by gender" (p. 210). Finally, unpaid work in the home has remained the preserve of women and, until recently, has not been acknowledged as work.

In addition, labour legislation in New Zealand has historically focused on "difference" by placing restrictions on women's involvement in paid work. For example, the Employment of Females Act 1873 restricted women's hours in factories to 8 hours per day. According to Coney (1993), it was generally believed that one of the main reasons why women needed protective legislation was "to safeguard their health as future mothers" (p. 211), although she adds that this protection did usually not extend to domestic servants.[7] For instance, in 1908 the Secretary of Labour stated that "the less the future wives and mothers of the nation have to encounter industrial toil and enter into industrial competition with men the better" (cited in Coney, 1993, p. 210). Ingram (1988) provides examples from as recently as the 1970s of women being "sacked" on becoming pregnant and, in some industries, being required to resign on marriage.

Dann (1992) suggests that there was a "re-valuing tendency" dominant amongst New Zealand feminists in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This revaluation strategy, according to Dann, required that women be seen to be of equal value to men in society. This included having equal access to everything valued by men. Dann suggests, however, that while a liberal interpretation of this strategy involves formal equal rights, a more radical interpretation would make allowances for genuine differences, such as childbearing, in a way which valued these differences.

While equality for New Zealand women in the public world has been sought in legislation such as the Equal Pay Act 1972 and the Human Rights Commission Act 1977, the government has shown a reluctance to become involved in decision making in the private sphere. However, in some areas this has changed, with, for example, the recent introduction of policies to combat domestic violence.

Despite this history there does not appear to have been such an intense focus, as in both Sweden and the United States, on the issues of "equality" and "difference" between women and men in debates about parental leave in New Zealand.

The upholding of "difference" was still very evident with the passing of the Maternity Leave and Employment Protection Act which came into force in 1981. This Act attempted to establish a minimum code for maternity leave and related matters. But no provisions existed for paternity leave or extended leave for the father of a child.

"Difference" continues to be upheld in the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 through the provision of separate leave for women and men around the time of childbirth. This initial period of leave is considerably longer for women than for men. However, the extended parental-leave provision treats mothers and fathers equally. The Ministry of Women's Affairs (1995, p. 23) argues that New Zealand parental-leave provisions were initially designed to retain women in the labour market, then became oriented to promoting gender equality in the labour market and, only recently, to promoting gender equality both in the labour market and in the care of children.

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[7] This distinction on the grounds of class (and ethnicity) of protective labour legislation is supported by Vogel's analysis of United States legislation.

While debates around parental leave have addressed issues of pregnancy and childbirth and these policies themselves have to some extent been based on the concepts of "difference", the issue of breastfeeding as a potential point of difference has rarely been discussed (Department of Labour, 1986; Women's Affairs, 1995). For example, in a Labour Party discussion document on paid parental leave, which has as its prime focus the attainment of equal opportunities for women and men in both paid employment and the home, the issue of breastfeeding is not mentioned (Labour Party, 1994). If mentioned in the literature, it tends to be only hinted at. For example, the 12 Weeks Paid Parental Leave Campaign (1994) notes that "a mother needs time to recover from pregnancy and childbirth and establish feeding routines" (no pagination).

In New Zealand "difference" within "difference" is also an issue when examining parental leave. Davies and Jackson (1993) suggest that although research on strategies for equality of women with men in paid work indicates that women should delay childbearing until they have developed a career, this can be problematic. They argue, in the context of Maori childbearing patterns, that women's decisions about when to bear children should not have to be driven by the need to participate "successfully" in the labour market. According to the authors, the real issue is "the need to develop strategies to counter labour market structures so that women who choose to withdraw temporarily from the labour market are not disadvantaged upon re-entry" (p. 141). That is, labour markets need to accommodate "difference", rather than Maori women being forced to adhere to a new norm which is developing for Pakeha women, which is, in turn, based on a Pakeha male norm. The authors suggest "a key component of these strategies would be a responsive education system which provides Maori and other women with learning opportunities appropriate to their needs at different stages of their life cycle" (p. 141).[8]

Also in the New Zealand context, Briar (1995) raises the issue of the "norm" against which difference is measured. She notes that although the inequalities between women, and between men, should not take precedence over patterns of gender inequality in paid employment, not all men have the same opportunities in paid work.[9] In addition, Briar suggests that the "norm" can be changed by reducing men's hours of paid work, so women's hours are no longer "atypical". But other writers seek to extend the norm more towards the "traditional" middle-class male model. For example, in a recently published book for New Zealand "working mothers", mothers-to-be are advised amongst other things to:

> Check the facilities where you choose to give birth. With some jobs things don't stop just because you've had a baby! Ask if there is access to a phone

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[8] This recognition of "difference" between women is central to most current feminist understandings. According to black American writers, Hooks (1984) and Carby (1982), differences between women based on race and class identity override, at times, the experiences which women have in common, compromising "any feminist theory and practice founded on the notion of simple equality." (Carby, p. 213)

[9] This is supported by Eisenstein (1981) who claims that although the "progressive-liberal-feminist tendency" recognises the "struggle for formal equality between men and women within the law as central to women's liberation" it leaves unresolved the question of "which men women will be equal to" (p. 348). These analyses (*see* previous footnote) draw attention to the fact that class and race differences exist not only between women, but also between men.

> and fax and whether there will be restrictions upon visitors during business hours? (Holloway, 1994, p. 28, cited in Annandale, 1995).

Similarly, Bunkle (1992) notes an advertisement for "three piece suits for the pregnant executive" arguing that, in general, women "are allowed to enter the market in as far as they are willing to impersonate men, and conform to the male life cycle" (p. 14).

However, viewing New Zealand from within an international context, it is worth considering where the "norms" are being developed. For example, with increased foreign investment, and improved communication systems, the "norm" may no longer be the paid employment patterns of a white, middle-class, New Zealand male, but may, in fact, be the pattern of work of a relatively small, yet powerful, group in the world such as white, middle-class, North American men (Strassmann, 1993).

Mothers: Breastfeeding, Parental Leave, and Paid Work

In New Zealand and other industrialised nations women's and men's patterns of paid and unpaid work tend to show the most extreme "difference" in the first months after a child is born. One significant factor potentially contributing to this "different" behaviour is the practice of breastfeeding. This section therefore seeks to introduce some key issues in relation to breastfeeding and its intersection with the increasing participation of mothers with young children in the labour market which have not been specifically addressed in the New Zealand context (Galtry, in progress). The implications for parental leave and paid employment practices and policies, as well as for childcare provisions, are examined.

Breastfeeding raises some potentially difficult issues in relation to mothers' participation in paid work in the early months of a child's life. As discussed in the previous section, the costs of being "different" from men in the labour market can be considerable, so for women to "choose" to emphasise this difference by breastfeeding requires a judgment that the benefits of the latter are also substantial. Therefore any discussion of breastfeeding, parental leave, and paid work needs to be firstly viewed against the evidence of the benefits of breastfeeding.

Benefits of Breastfeeding - Children, Mothers, Employers, and Society

Although much of the research and literature on breastfeeding is dominated by a Western biomedical orientation (Beasley, 1991), there is much evidence to suggest that the benefits of breastfeeding are far wider ranging than those at the physiological level alone (Cunningham, Jelliffe, & Jelliffe 1991; Dignam, 1995). Although the developmental and psychosocial benefits of breastfeeding are beyond the scope of this report, they may in themselves provide a justification for parental-leave policies.

However, merely within the realm of biomedicine there has been a growing body of research in recent years which suggests that breastfeeding has significant health benefits, not only for children and mothers in so-called "developing" countries, as previously assumed, but for those in industrialised nations also (Cunningham, Jelliffe, & Jelliffe, 1991).

Like most medical studies, particularly those of a longitudinal nature which try to establish inter-relationships between one factor such as breastfeeding and health outcomes over a long time period, studies on breastfeeding are fraught with methodological problems. These include the need to establish whether children have been fully breastfed, partially breastfed, and for what duration, as well as controlling for other factors such as maternal smoking or household poverty (Greiner, 1979; Auerbach, 1987; Auerbach, Renfrew, & Minchin, 1991). Nevertheless, although individual studies on breastfeeding may, at times, be potentially problematic in terms of methodologies, they suggest, overwhelmingly, benefits attached to breastfeeding for children, and by extension for parents, employers, and wider society.

Infant Benefits

This section outlines some of the key physiological benefits attached to breastfeeding for infants in industrialised countries, with particular relevance to New Zealand.

According to a recent global epidemiological review of breastfeeding, the infant health benefits attached to breastfeeding in industrialised nations include "significant reductions in nongastrointestinal infections, including pneumonia, bacteremia and meningitis, and with a reduced frequency of certain chronic diseases in later life" (Cunningham, Jelliffe, & Jelliffe, 1991, p. 659). There is also evidence to suggest that breastfeeding is not only anti-infective but also affords some protection against the development of certain allergies. Recent research suggests that asthma is amongst these conditions (Burr *et al.*, 1993; Reid, 1995). In addition, Walker (1993) provides an extensive review of recent research which identifies a wide range of infant health risks attached to "artificial feeding" in industrialised countries.

In contrast to developing countries, breastfeeding in industrialised nations, in general, does not have life and death consequences. However, the New Zealand cot death study initiated in 1987 has been instrumental in highlighting in both the national and international context those primary factors, including breastfeeding, which are protective against sudden infant death syndrome (Ford *et al.*, 1993; Mitchell *et al.*, 1991). In addition, Maori infants are identified as at greater risk of sudden death than other groups and are targeted for special attention in terms of cotdeath prevention strategies, including breastfeeding (Public Health Commission, 1995e, p. 17).

Of particular relevance to early childhood education is the issue of otitis media. The Public Health Commission (1995d, pp. 10-11) notes that otitis media with effusion, commonly referred to as "glue ear", represents a major concern for child health in New Zealand. Recent studies amongst Swedish and American infants have highlighted the protective role of exclusive and prolonged breastfeeding against this condition (Aniansson *et al.*, 1994; Duncan *et al.*, 1993; Ford & Labbok, 1993; Walker *et al.*, 1994). In the New Zealand situation, "glue ear", and associated hearing failure, is noted to be consistently more common among children from Maori and Pacific Islands groups. The important protective effect of breastfeeding against this condition is stressed given that it may result in conductive hearing loss in early childhood which may, in turn, be related to some forms of "learning impairment (ie. delays in language development, reading skills and reduced levels of educational attainment)" (Public Health Commission, 1995d, p. 10).

There is also evidence to suggest that breastmilk enhances the growth and development of the brain and central nervous system (Bauer *et al.*, 1991; Lucas *et al.*, 1992; Morley *et al.*, 1988; Morrow-Tlucak, Houde, & Ernhart, 1988; Taylor & Wadsworth, 1984) and assists in the development of the jaw, gums, and teeth (Davis & Bell, 1991).

Maternal Benefits

Maternal benefits of breastfeeding include possible protective effects against breast cancer in premenopausal women (Kennedy, 1994; Newcomb *et al.*, 1994); ovarian cancer (Gwinn *et al.*, 1990; Hartge *et al.*, 1989), and osteoporosis (Blaauw *et al.*, 1994). In addition, one study suggests that women who have been breastfed as infants have less chance of developing breast cancer in later life (Freudenheim *et al.*, 1994). The Public Health Commission (1995a, p. 4) also outlines various maternal health benefits associated with breastfeeding.

In relation to paid employment, Shelton (1994) suggests that both mothers and fathers, or other partners, may benefit from a breastfed child "since breastfed babies are less likely to become ill and thus be excluded from child care" (p. 9).

Employer Benefits

In the American context, various studies have examined the experiences of Los Angeles Water and Power which instituted a "lactation program" in the workplace (Gibson, 1993; Giesel, 1994; Shalowitz, 1993). Gibson (1993) claims there has been a significant difference in the illness rates of breastfed as opposed to bottlefed babies which "translates into direct savings in health care costs" (p. 17) for employers as well as benefits to mothers on account of reduced absenteeism.[10] The rate of absenteeism was found to be 7 times lower among the parents of breastfed babies than those of bottlefed babies (Giesel, 1994, p. 12).[11] In relation to this, the company's director of human resources claims the programme provides a $4 to $5 return for each $1 it costs (Shalowitz, 1993). Shalowitz also contends that like many other work-family programmes, "the lactation program promotes employee loyalty, improves productivity, reduces absenteeism, reduces turnover, helps recruitment and improves the company's public image" (p. 21).

Shelton (1994) suggests that another benefit to employers of supporting breastfeeding in the workplace is that workers who are mothers are more likely to return following leave and therefore valuable skills and experience are not lost.

Societal Benefits

Anholm (1986, p. 1) argues that, given the relatively recent emphasis placed on primary preventative approaches to health care, the role of breastfeeding as a "major health intervention" in terms of both its short- and long-term benefits needs to be given greater recognition. She argues that this is also important because of the dramatic impact on the cost of infant health care observable in lowered hospitalisation rates for breastfed babies at all socioeconomic levels. Similarly, in an analysis of the economics of breastfeeding, Waring (1988) argues that, "An inadequately fed infant is a cost to the health system . . ., to the education system (because of brain development), and to society generally" (p. 207).

Breastfeeding Recommendations - Implications for Paid Work

Official recommendations for breastfeeding can have a significant effect on breastfeeding initiation and duration rates, and, therefore, major implications for women's patterns of paid and unpaid work in the early months of a child's life (Galtry, in press). Because of this they are extremely important in determining appropriate parental-leave and childcare policies. Recommendations for breastfeeding not only cover initiation but also duration, including whether breastfeeding is exclusive or partial, and also whether "demand feeding" is preferable to time-scheduled patterns of feeding (*see* Public Health Commission, 1995b, 1995c).

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[10] Underlying this finding is an assumption that it will be mothers looking after sick children.

[11] In relation to these studies research from Sweden indicates that unplanned absences through "pregnancy, children's illness or personal sick leave" is more problematic to managers than parental leave which is "planned in advance" (Galinsky, 1989, p. 34). This has implications for the issue of breastfeeding in relation to parental-leave policies.

In line with international recommendations (Innocenti Declaration, 1990) and those of specific groups such as the Royal New Zealand Plunket Society and the New Zealand Paediatric Society, official recommendations in New Zealand stress the importance of exclusive, "on-demand" breastfeeding until 6 months of age (Public Health Commission, 1995b,c,d, &,e).

Crosscultural Breastfeeding Rates - A Backdrop to Paid Employment

While there are a range of factors which influence a country's breastfeeding rates, policies on leave following the birth of a child and other employment-related policies and practices are important (Greiner, 1990). Therefore, it is useful, before examining breastfeeding in relation to issues surrounding parental leave and paid employment, to compare rates of breastfeeding in 3 selected countries - New Zealand, America, and Sweden - to allow crosscultural analyses to be better contextualised.[12] In addition, chapter 7 provides detailed information on mothers' participation in paid work in these countries which is also useful in contextualising the following discussion.

New Zealand

Findings taken from unpublished Plunket Society data, based on the preliminary analysis of an ongoing 5-year longitudinal study of a group of 4285 children born in New Zealand during 1990-1991, indicate that 94 percent of New Zealand women initiate breastfeeding (Public Health Commission, 1994b). However, during the first 8 weeks of feeding, breastfeeding rates dropped to 79 percent with this change to bottle feeding being most likely to occur in the first week.[13] In addition, it is noted that 62 percent of New Zealand infants are still "receiving some breastfeeding" at 3 months (Public Health Commission, 1994b, p. 46). Within these overall figures there are some differences in breastfeeding rates between women from Maori, Pacific Islands, and European groups.

Although rates of breastfeeding in New Zealand are identified as relatively high when compared with those of the United States and the United Kingdom (Public Health Commission, 1994b) they "have tended to level off since the late 1980s" (Public Health Commission, 1995a, p. 4). Furthermore, in its policy advice to the Ministry of Health, the Public Health Commission advocates an increase in breastfeeding rates by the year 2000 (Public Health Commission, 1995a, p. 5). These targets seek:

- To increase exclusive breastfeeding at 3 months from 60 percent (1991) to 70 percent by 1997, and 75 percent by the year 2000.
- To increase breastfeeding (exclusive or partial) at 6 months from 55 percent (1991) to 70 percent by 1997, and 75 percent by the year 2000.

These targets of significantly increased breastfeeding rates need to be viewed against a long historical, and potentially conflicting, trend of increasing participation in paid work by New Zealand mothers with a child under 1 year of age.

Sweden

Although New Zealand has a comparatively high breastfeeding initiation rate, at least among industrialised nations, data from Sweden indicate both higher initiation and duration rates.[14] In 1991, 91.5 percent of Swedish women were exclusively breastfeeding at 1 week, 70.8 percent at 2 months, 51.8 percent at 4 months, and 28.9 percent at 6 months. In the same year, 5.1 percent of women were partially breastfeeding at 1 week and 24.8 percent of women at 6 months (N. Brunn, Institutet för arbetslivsforskning, personal communication, 10 January 1995).

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[12] The reasons for selecting these 3 countries are set out in chapter 1.

[13] It is likely that this early decrease in breastfeeding is connected to the mother's discharge from hospital.

The United States

In 1988, 54 percent of American women were breastfeeding their babies at discharge from the birth site and 21 percent at 5 to 6 months (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 1990, pp. 379-80). (No indication is given of whether breastfeeding was exclusive or not.) These figures were substantially less for low-income women (32 percent were breastfeeding in the early postbirth period and 9 percent at 5-6 months) and black women (25 percent in the early postbirth period and 8 percent at 5-6 months). According to this report, these latter findings are significant because low-income women and black women constitute a significant proportion of all new mothers in the United States (approximately 25 percent and 17 percent respectively).

Parental Leave and Breastfeeding

As already discussed, the link between parental, or more specifically maternity leave, and support of breastfeeding is clearly seen as a key element in the design of parental-leave policies in some European countries (European Commission, 1994). In general, however, the issue of breastfeeding in relation to that of leave around the birth of a child raises some major complexities. These include the need to establish what type of leave or combinations of leave are appropriate, what other factors influence breastfeeding, and also the role for public policy in helping to resolve conflicts between achieving gender equity in the labour market and desired health outcomes.

There are a number of studies which uphold the idea that a period of leave is supportive of breastfeeding. Many of these studies, however, are primarily focused on health outcomes and do not take into account specific issues of job protection or leave reimbursement, and the way in which these can impact on the short- and long-term wellbeing of many mothers and their children. Whether these factors are mentioned or not depends, at times, on the particular country in which the study is carried out and its parental-leave provisions.

Littman, Medendorp, and Goldfarb (1994), in an American study designed to assess the effect of working outside the home on women's intention to breastfeed among 115 mainly middle-class new mothers found that, while the length of maternity leave did not influence the decision to breastfeed, 42.9 percent of the women who planned to return to paid employment stated that this was a factor that would affect the duration of breastfeeding.

Similarly, the findings of a longitudinal study of 360 Danish mothers seeking to investigate the interrelationship between the utilisation of maternity leave, mother's resumption of occupation after delivery, and the duration of breastfeeding suggest a "significantly positive correlation . . . between the time for maternal return to work and the duration of breastfeeding" (Hansen *et al.*, 1993, p. 89). It was found that, while 95 percent of the families (mainly the women, 92 percent) utilised the entire 24 weeks of maternity leave, most women (76 percent) took even longer leave, mainly for the purpose of breastfeeding.[15]

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[14] Greiner (1993) argues that although these breastfeeding rates are comparatively high among industrialised nations there are still a number of factors which are not supportive of the practice of breastfeeding in Sweden.

Emphasising the need for *paid* "maternity leaves", Bueche (1990) highlights the interdependent relationship, even in industrialised nations, between the economic and the physical and social wellbeing of the mother and the wellbeing of the child. Contrasting the maternal and infant health-care practices of the United States and former West Germany, Bueche proposes a number of reasons which might have accounted for the lower rates of infant mortality in West Germany at that time. These included factors related to health-care practices as well as those which indicated greater economic wellbeing among women. Included amongst the latter were the absence of economic barriers to maternal-infant care with all women covered either by a statutory insurance plan or private insurance, and paid maternity leave whereby mothers could choose to take paid leave 6 weeks prior to delivery but were "compelled" to take 8 weeks' paid leave after delivery.[16] According to Bueche, this was able to be extended to a 6-month leave of absence with a guarantee of re-employment if the mother so wished. In conjunction with these latter policies, it is noted that West Germany also had higher rates of breastfeeding.

Although not mentioning provisions for payment of leave, the United States report "Healthy People 2000" nevertheless contended that an "important barrier" to achieving national breastfeeding objectives "is the general absence of work policies and facilities that support lactating women" (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 1990, p. 380).[17] Consequently, it was claimed there is a need to convince ***employers*** "to provide assistance such as extended maternity leave, part-time employment, provision of facilities for pumping breastmilk or breastfeeding, and on-site childcare" (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 1990, p. 380). Also in the United States context, other recommendations have stressed the need for "maternity leave" so as to enable, in particular, those women with little flexibility or control over the structure of the workday and the work environment, and often associated with this, lower pay and occupational status, to breastfeed (Barber-Madden, Petschek, & Pakter, 1987; Katcher & Lanese, 1985; Kurinij *et al.*, 1989).

Exploring the intersection between women's wellbeing following the birth and breastfeeding, Acheson and Danner (1993) claim that while the return of mothers to paid employment in the United States is strongly related to the cessation of breastfeeding, this does not necessarily occur in other countries with more adequate maternity and parental-leave provisions. The authors conclude that social policy interventions, especially in the occupational arena, are necessary to protect women of lower education and socioeconomic status and, in particular, those with less social support, because the wellbeing of these women and their infants tends to be at greater risk following the birth. This is illustrated in the New Zealand context by the example of Family 8 (*see* chapter 6) in which the mother, economically compelled to return to full-time paid employment when her infant was a month old, states that she would have liked a period of paid leave for *both* her own health as well as to breastfeed her baby.

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[15] In Denmark this 24 weeks of postnatal leave (14 weeks' maternity leave and 10 weeks' parental leave) is paid (European Commission, 1994).

[16] Obviously the notion of protective legislation which "compels" mothers to take leave is highly problematic, especially in relation to goals of equal opportunity.

[17] This report precedes the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act discussed in other sections. However, there appears to be little information about whether this legislation has had any effect on United States breastfeeding rates.

Some studies go so far as to suggest a correlation between maternity leave or parental-leave provisions and breastfeeding rates. For instance, Gordon (1989) argues that the dramatic rise in Finnish breastfeeding rates from 1972 to 1982-83 were attributable not only to changes in hospital policy, which better accommodated the initiation of breastfeeding, but also to the introduction of more generous maternity-leave provisions, which allowed for the virtual salary replacement of women in paid employment. According to Gordon, the continued breastfeeding of more than half of the babies over the 6-month mark and almost a quarter well past this point in the 1982-1983 group represents a significant shift from earlier studies when breastfeeding rates rapidly declined early in the infant's life.

While Gordon (1989) identifies an improvement in maternity-leave provisions as one of the two main factors influencing an increase in breastfeeding rates, she cautions that such policies which "enable women to be at home to care for their newborn also encourage women to take on virtually total responsibility for early mothering" (p. 12). This maternity-leave policy means that neither the state, through childcare provisions, nor the father are seen as responsible for children in any significant way.

In contrast to these previous analyses, Helsing and Savage King (1982, p. 211) claim that parental leave (whether paid or unpaid) does not necessarily affect the rate of breastfeeding.[18] They argue that while women's increasing participation in paid employment is the most commonly cited reason to explain the decline in breastfeeding this argument contains several weaknesses. Firstly, mothers have traditionally worked, often far away from home, and still managed to breastfeed. Secondly, and relevant to the time of writing, they argue that in modern, industrialised societies, relatively few mothers of small children do, in fact, have paid work outside the home although there are many who do not breastfeed. And, finally, the findings of Norwegian research demonstrate that breastfeeding is more common among "working women" than among those who do not work outside the home. In relation to this they cite a Norwegian-language study which found that the rate of breastfeeding in one of the largest towns in Norway was much higher among women who had held paid jobs prior to the birth of the infant, than among those who had worked only at home.[19] Helsing and Savage King further refute any correlation between maternity-leave or parental-leave provisions and breastfeeding rates on the grounds that 1973 Norwegian labour-market statistics demonstrate that among mothers of children under 2 years of age, less than 15 percent were employed outside home, whereas 80 percent had stopped breastfeeding after the first half-year.[20]

These findings lend support to Greiner's contention (1990) that "ideational" factors, or broader cultural forces, exert as much, if not greater, influence on infant feeding decisions as material factors, including parental- or maternity-leave provisions. Greiner (1990) argues that although access to such benefits represents the "major determinant" of whether or not women in paid work will suffer from

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[18] In a later work, however, Helsing (1988) suggests that one of the factors influencing the dramatic rise in breastfeeding rates in Norway from the early 1970s to the mid 1980s was the extension of maternity leave in this period from 12 to 18 weeks and the availability of 2 weeks' paternity leave.

[19] However, the employment status of these breastfeeding mothers is unclear from Helsing and Savage King's account. In relation to this it is worth noting that those on parental leave, maternity leave, or paternity leave continue to be technically defined as in the labour force.

[20] This was a period, however, in which rates of breastfeeding were generally low amongst most Western nations.

material constraints to breastfeeding, by themselves these will not guarantee a corresponding increase in the rate of breastfeeding.[21]

Using Sweden as an interesting case study on which to test this hypothesis, Greiner provides an analysis of Swedish breastfeeding rates between 1945 to 1985 and contrasts these statistics with improvements in paid parental leave and reimbursements occurring in the same period. This comparison indicates that the "already generous maternity benefits" of the mid-1940s to the early 1970s did not prevent the rapid and continuous decline of breastfeeding in the same period. Conversely, the minor improvements in parental benefits introduced in the mid-1970s are not able to account for the rapid rise in breastfeeding rates occurring at that time, nor can the major improvements in benefits after 1979 be credited with any additional impact on the evenly rising breastfeeding rates since that time (Greiner, 1990, p. 5). Therefore, according to Greiner, the changes in breastfeeding rates have occurred independently of legislation and monetary incentives. Consequently, it is unrealistic to expect either that "employed women will be able to maintain exclusive breastfeeding any longer than the maternity leave they receive" or, conversely, that women will "necessarily breastfeed optimally, even with optimal maternity benefits, unless they are motivated to do so, have the necessary skills, and receive adequate support from their families, their employers and the health sector." (p. 6)[22]

Although Greiner demonstrates the absence of any direct causal effect between more generous parental-leave provisions and improved rates of breastfeeding in the Swedish context, it is nevertheless worth noting that in relation to other Western industrialised nations, Sweden offers generous parental-leave benefits, in terms of both time and wage replacement, while also having comparatively high initiation and duration rates of breastfeeding. Further, (as discussed in chapter 7), in Sweden female participation in the labour force in 1990 was the highest of all OECD countries. The intersection of these 3 factors is unique.

Greiner (1990) argues that given the differences amongst women's life and work situations there is probably a need for various combinations of fully paid, partially paid, and unpaid leave which might "allow most women to combine optimal breastfeeding with working in the way that best met their economic circumstances and career goals" (p. 7).[23] According to Greiner (1990), the following aspects need to be considered when attempting to develop the "optimal maternity leave policy":

> 1) Maximum flexibility, or choice should be allowed to the woman so that the only leave taken before delivery is that which is really needed. (Most health professionals support women's common preference to work up to nearly the date of delivery, except in certain states of ill health.) This allows the bulk of leaves to be taken after delivery, which would be beneficial for breastfeeding.
>
> 2) At least three or four months leave should be provided at nearly full pay, to

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[21] In support of this claim Greiner (1990) argues that the constraints to breastfeeding amongst middle- and upper-middle-class women in paid employment in the United States are often "cultural and attitudinal rather than economic or structural" (p. 4).

[22] This analysis stands in direct contrast to Gordon's (1989) contention that the rise and decline in breastfeeding rates in Finland over a 20-year period could be attributed, in large part, to the availability and generosity of maternity benefits.

[23] Interestingly, much of the literature on breastfeeding and paid employment assumes that most Western women have "careers", rather than simply jobs.

> ensure that nearly all women availed themselves of this and thus had the opportunity to practice exclusive breastfeeding during this period. This would allow for more dynamism in the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding. . . .
>
> 3) A small sum of money could be provided to women who wanted to take a longer leave than this, at least for a few months. Naturally, they should suffer no risk of losing their job or their seniority if they chose to utilize this benefit.
>
> 4) Flexible and/or shorter working hours for another period of time, should be provided for those women who wanted it, especially if the total length of the maternity leave is less than four months.
>
> 5) Paternity leaves should be encouraged for men to be present at the time of delivery and to assist at home during the time of mother's recovery. In a few countries the father is also encouraged to spend time at home later in his infant's life. Besides the obvious benefit for mother, father and child, paternity leaves would help reduce the bias against hiring women. (p. 8)

In addition, Greiner (1990) suggests that when a choice has to be made between (1) long unpaid (or poorly paid) leave and (2) short, well-paid leave, the first is preferable in terms of protecting breastfeeding. This is because, according to Greiner, those women motivated to breastfeed will be able to absorb the income loss whereas the poorest women rarely have jobs in the formal sector that provide them with maternity benefits anyway. This view does not appear to be supported elsewhere in the literature. For instance, a major United States workshop on breastfeeding (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 1984), whose stated aim was "to identify and reduce the barriers that interfere with breastfeeding, especially in those population groups with low prevalence of breastfeeding - among women who are minority, low income and less educated" (p. iii), identified *paid* [emphasis added] maternity leave and flexible work arrangements as critical to the successful promotion of breastfeeding by mothers in paid employment. These latter factors were seen as particularly relevant to women of lower socioeconomic status given a steady increase in breastfeeding within the previous decade predominantly among middle- and upper-income, educated, white women. These sentiments are echoed by Barber-Madden, Petschek, and Pakter (1987, p. 533).

Clearly, issues related to what types and combinations of family leave are most appropriate in order to facilitate women's ability to combine breastfeeding and paid employment cannot be discussed on their own. For instance, an international workshop convened in Italy in 1979 to examine issues related to the need to protect breastfeeding amongst women in paid employment proposed the following recommendations:.

> (1) a minimum of 3 months maternity leave is indicated for the physical recovery of a mother and her satisfactory establishment of lactation;
>
> (2) two one-hour nursing breaks should be available for all mothers - up to a specified age of the child, and over and above the rest periods granted to workers in general - and that she be remunerated as per her normal or

average salary during these breaks;

(3) the establishment of crèches be considered for infants above three months of age;

(4) flexible working schedules for parents of small children be considered, as well as the option for periodic part-time work, or taking work home, if feasible;

(5) sharing of parental duties . . . at least after the first six weeks after the birth.

It was concluded that the cost of the services mentioned above must be the responsibility of the community and society as a whole, rather than a burden on the woman in paid work or her employer (cited in Helsing & Savage King, 1982, pp. 217-218).

It is interesting to examine the relevance of shared leave as recommended above, or paternity leave as outlined by Greiner (1990), for the practice of breastfeeding. For instance, there is evidence that for many women, although subject to ethnicity, socioeconomic and marital status (and obviously sexual orientation), the father's support may be critical in establishing and maintaining breastfeeding (Cronenwett & Reinhardt, 1987; Dignam, 1995; Littman, Medendorp, & Goldfarb, 1994).[24]

Combining Breastfeeding and Paid Employment

If women can, in fact, successfully combine paid work with breastfeeding then some of the arguments for relatively long periods of parental leave may be reduced. However, as with studies on the benefits of breastfeeding, much of the literature examining women's experiences of combining breastfeeding and paid employment suffers from methodological problems (Van Esterik & Greiner, 1981). According to the authors, these include samples which are too small or too biased; those which fail to identify whether women are working full time or part time, and those which do not distinguish between the nature and conditions of the job. Consequently, the findings of this research are, at times, paradoxical and contradictory.

While some studies suggest that the mother's paid employment per se is incompatible with breastfeeding (Lawrence, 1982)[25] others argue, as mentioned, that in many societies women more easily integrate breastfeeding into their "working lives" and therefore paid employment does not present the major constraint to breastfeeding often assumed (Greiner, 1990; Palmer, 1988; Van Esterik & Greiner, 1981).[26] There is, however, a growing body of research which examines a range of employment-related variables such as the timing of return to paid employment, the number of hours

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[24] These studies are, in general, based upon the concept of the Western heterosexual 2-parent family and deal specifically with issues of paternal support. For instance, Littman *et al.* (1994) draw attention to a study which suggests that amongst a group of economically disadvantaged women with low rates of breastfeeding, most of whom were unmarried and not living with the father, the mother's own wishes were most significant. Also in the American context, Puerto Rican and Cuban women tend to identify their mothers as more influential than their husbands in terms of infant feeding decisions (Cronenwett & Reinhardt, 1987).

[25] Lawrence (1982) argues that there is a dominant cultural expectation in the United States that the mother's return to paid employment signifies an appropriate and legitimate reason to terminate the breastfeeding relationship.

[26] However these observations are, in general, based on the experiences of women's work in "developing" countries which are problematic comparisons.

"worked", and the nature of the job as significant in determining the ability of women in paid employment to breastfeed. It is these latter factors which have emerged as central themes in the literature on breastfeeding and paid employment, and which this section of the report will focus on. In addition, there is an examination of various workplace reforms which support breastfeeding.

Timing of Return to Paid Employment and Hours Worked

Although breastfeeding may be possible following maternal return to employment, the combined effect of the timing of the resumption of maternal employment outside the home and the number of hours worked has a notable effect on infant weaning age. Auerbach and Guss (1984, p. 960), in a study examining the experiences of 567 American mothers, found that women who resumed paid employment within 16 weeks of the birth were more likely to wean their babies earlier than other mothers.

Kearney and Cronenwett (1991) also highlight the influence of the timing of resumption of work and the number of hours worked on breastfeeding. This study followed 120 "highly educated, motivated first-time mothers", the majority of whom were either professionals of some kind, managers, retailers, or skilled workers, through to 6 months after the birth (Kearney & Cronenwett, 1991, p. 478). Problems occurred more frequently and breastfeeding was of shorter duration when women resumed paid employment within 2 months of the birth and were employed longer hours. Further, by 5 and 6 weeks after the birth the number of problems experienced in relation to breastfeeding correlated with the number of hours worked per week.

Dimico (1990) and Morris (1993), in the United States and Dutch contexts respectively, similarly found that a later return to paid employment was a central factor positively influencing the duration of breastfeeding.

In relation specifically to the effect on breastfeeding of the number of hours spent in paid work per week, Auerbach and Guss (1984) found that part-time workers were more likely than full-time workers to report that their infants breastfed longer than a year. In addition, women who returned to full-time paid work (40 or more hours per week) when their babies were under 4 months old had the greatest difficulty in continuing to breastfeed. These broad findings regarding the detrimental effect which full-time paid employment appears to exert on the duration of breastfeeding are further supported by Gielen *et al.* (1991), Ryan and Martinez (1989), and Ryan *et al.* (1991).

Other studies have highlighted ethnic differences and, by association, often those of socioeconomic status, in relation to the number of hours worked and the impact on breastfeeding. For instance, Kurinij *et al.* (1989), in a survey of maternal employment and breastfeeding patterns carried out among 668 black mothers and 511 white mothers in Washington DC, found that while there were no significant differences in the rate of breastfeeding amongst part-time or full-time white women employees, black women returning to part-time employment were more likely to breastfeed than those returning to full-time paid employment. Kurinij *et al.* suggest that there was also a greater economic need amongst the black women in their sample to return to paid employment soon after birth on a full-time basis because many of them were sole parents.

Type of Job

Although it has been argued that employment factors have little impact on breastfeeding practice, given the fact that many "well-educated women" are managing to combine paid employment and breastfeeding (Lawrence, 1988), this analysis fails to recognise the often complex interrelationships between socioeconomic status, ethnicity, educational attainment, and occupational position which impact on the ability to combine paid employment and breastfeeding. For instance, there is much evidence to support the fact that managing breastfeeding in the workplace is possible, although not without difficulties, mainly for women in professional or semiprofessional-type jobs (Helsing & Savage King, 1982; Hills-Bonczyk *et al.*, 1993; Kurinij *et al.*, 1989; Ryan & Martinez,1989).[27]

For instance, a 1976 Norwegian-language study (cited in Helsing & Savage King, 1982 p. 214) found that among mothers who were employed as academics, business, and other professionals, 50 percent were still breastfeeding after 5 months, compared with 22 percent of those mothers who were employed as industrial workers and service workers. Helsing and Savage King (1982, p. 214) argue that one of the reasons why more highly educated women continue to breastfeed longer than other women is due to the fact that the jobs held by this particular group "are often of a kind that is compatible with the demands of breastfeeding (flexible working hours, 'understanding' employer, possibilities for taking at least some of the work home, possibilities for taking the baby along to the place of work)." In contrast, working-class women usually have less education and face both stronger competition for jobs and greater difficulties in demanding special services from their employers, especially when these demands are not supported by legislation. In addition, their workplaces are less accommodating to babies; taking their work home is rarely possible; and they may have to travel some distance to work, and so are unable to return home to breastfeed their infant during breaks (Helsing & Savage King, 1982, p. 214).

These broad findings in relation to the intersection between breastfeeding and occupational status and income group are supported by contemporary American research (Hills-Bonczyk *et al.*, 1993; Ryan & Martinez, 1989). In addition, the importance of workplace flexibility in "managing" both paid and unpaid employment and breastfeeding is highlighted in a Canadian study (Morse & Bottorff, 1989). Other studies stress that certain workplace facilities, including one's own office or a private space to pump breastmilk or feed a baby, as well as a refrigerator in which to store expressed milk, are critical to the success of breastfeeding in the workplace (Auerbach, 1993; Eiger & Wendkos Olds, 1987). Clearly, women in professional occupations are more likely to have access to such facilities, particularly the use of an office.

Kurinij *et al.* (1989) also highlight the importance of occupational status in breastfeeding practices. They found that maternal employment per se was associated with a reduced duration of breastfeeding among black women although not among white women. However, in both groups those women working in professional occupations breastfed longer than those returning to sales or technical positions. In addition, white women professionals breastfed longer than those in clerical positions. The authors suggest that women in professional occupations "appear to have control over their work environment and can structure a more satisfactory relationship between the demands of employment and infant feeding". In contrast, those employed in clerical and sales occupations "appear to have little freedom to accommodate the demands of employment and the needs of their infants". (Kurinij *et al.*, 1989, p. 1250). These observations are also supported by Katcher and Lanese (1985).

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[27] International literature indicates that the same group of women, those returning to work for "reasons related to career development" and characterised by "higher incomes, higher status occupations, higher educational qualifications and . . . older than the average mother", are also among those more likely to take parental leave (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1995, p. 50).

Not surprisingly perhaps, in the United States it would appear that the combination of breastfeeding and paid employment is also more difficult amongst various migrant groups, who have traditionally held low-status and low-paid jobs (Scrimshaw, 1984).

Similarly perhaps, in the New Zealand context, the Pacific Islands communities provide a documented example of the way in which breastfeeding practices are adversely affected by their involvement in paid employment (Galtry, in press). Although it appears that breastfeeding is regarded as important within Pacific Islands communities - Pacific Islands mothers being the most likely of all groups of New Zealand mothers to be breastfeeding their babies at the age of 9 months or 1 year - "going back to work" was the most commonly cited reason given for the change from breast to bottle at 3 months through to 9 months after the birth by this group of mothers (Public Health Commission, 1994b, p. 46 and 1994c, p. 100).

The conflict for one Samoan mother between the economic need to return to full-time, paid employment, also involving shiftwork, in the period immediately following the birth and the desire to continue breastfeeding is highlighted in the case study of Family 8 (*see* chapter 6).

Research from the United States suggests that receiving payment on leave is particularly important for black and low-income women as these women comprise the group most likely not to take maternity leave and to return to work soon after childbirth through economic necessity (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1995). Not surprisingly, uptake of leave is greater among such mothers if it is paid. On these grounds it is suggested that unpaid leave does not represent "a genuine option" for some groups of women (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1995, p. 13). Therefore, whether leave is paid or not has implications for infant feeding practices particularly among low-income women, who often include those in various ethnic minorities. This is further reinforced by the literature which indicates that these women are also the least likely to have employment facilities and conditions which support breastfeeding in the workplace.

Workplace Reforms Which Facilitate Breastfeeding

Helsing and Savage King (1982) argue that, while the conditions of paid work often disrupt "the optimal child feeding pattern, including breastfeeding", it should be the former rather than the latter which needs to change. This, according to the authors, "demands flexibility and understanding on the part of employers - strengthened by protective legislation" (p. 214).

■ ILO Conventions

Specific measures which would potentially enable women in paid employment to breastfeed were outlined by the International Labour Office (ILO) in 1919 (Convention No. 3) and revised in 1952 (Convention No. 103). The Conventions state that an employed woman "if she is nursing a child, be allowed half an hour twice a day during her working hours for this purpose" (cited in Helsing & Savage King, 1982, p. 214-215). It is also stated that these nursing breaks are to be regarded as working hours and remunerated accordingly (Article 5, para 1). Facilities for breastfeeding or daycare of babies are also recommended, the financing or subsidising of which should be borne by the community or by compulsory social insurance. Further general recommendations potentially supportive of breastfeeding include 12 weeks' maternity leave (6 weeks before and 6 weeks after birth) with cash benefits of at least 66 percent of previous earnings and prohibition of dismissal during maternity leave.

New Zealand is among those ILO member countries, including Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, which have no provision for breastfeeding breaks. In contrast, recent information from Sweden indicates that although breastfeeding breaks are no longer seen as important in the Swedish workplace, given the existence of generous parental-leave provisions, mothers in the public sector are entitled, nevertheless, to 2 hours off work with pay while mothers in the private sector are entitled to 1 hour off without pay, ostensibly for the purposes of breastfeeding (M. Sundström, personal communication, 23 August 1995).

It has been claimed that the fact that only a relatively small number of member nations have ratified these conventions indicates a lack of concern for the ability of women to reconcile the various aspects of their lives (Helsing & Savage King, 1982, p. 215; Van Esterik & Greiner, 1981, p. 193). In addition, according to Palmer (1991), legislation to protect breastfeeding in the workplace implies a recognition that breastfeeding is not only a "contribution to the individual welfare of a baby and her or his mother" but also "to society as a whole" (p. 1).

However, even though there may be provision at the national level for breastfeeding breaks this does not necessarily mean that they will be implemented, enforced, or even utilised.[28] At times, for instance, there are a range of informal pressures from both employers and co-workers which inhibit or prevent the practice of breastfeeding (Maher, 1992; Morris, 1993).

■ Examples of Workplace Reforms To Encourage Breastfeeding

There are a number of studies which examine worksite "lactation programs", usually involving the installation of breast-pumping facilities, designed specifically to facilitate breastfeeding in the workplace (Gibson, 1993; Giesel, 1994; Katcher & Lanese, 1985; Shalowitz, 1993). An example of such a programme is that established in 1980 by a community hospital in New Jersey employing a large number of women. Findings of a study of this programme suggest the importance not only of "maternity leave" (3 months' leave, presumably unpaid, but with guaranteed job reinstatement and readily granted extensions), but also of various workplace reforms (including the provision of an electric breast pump, breastmilk storage facilities, and professional advice) for the facilitation of breastfeeding (Katcher & Lanese, 1985).

According to Katcher and Lanese (1985, p. 646), this programme benefits not only working mothers and their infants but also employers, requiring "minimal resource utilization" on the part of the latter. Some mothers reported that if this programme had not been in place they would not have returned to work, some said they would have returned at a later date, while others claimed that it enabled them to work longer hours.

However, despite the existence of a few such programmes this does not appear necessarily to indicate any increasing support for women seeking to combine breastfeeding and paid employment in the United States. For instance, a survey examining the types and prevalence of policies established by a number of large American companies to support breastfeeding among their employees found that while several of these programmes existed particularly within hospitals and the insurance industry, there was little evidence of any generalised support for breastfeeding mothers in the American workplace. Nor was there anything to suggest that the latter had responded to "the changing needs of its workers brought about by the trend to employ mothers of young infants" (Moore & Jansa, 1987, p. 195).

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[28] Richardson (1975, p. 250) also notes that it is important to determine what categories of women are covered or not covered by such provisions.

It is apparent from the literature that a technological approach to breastfeeding, reliant on the use of breast pumps and necessary facilities, has become a central part of the American approach to integrating breastfeeding and paid employment. As yet, this appears to be a peculiarly American phenomenon. Contrasting this with Scandinavia, Palmer (1991) argues that while breastfeeding rates are high and a greater proportion of women than in either the United States or United Kingdom are formally employed, "pumping has not become the norm" (p. 1). However, what Palmer fails to mention is that given the relatively generous and lengthy parental-leave provisions in Scandinavian countries, as well as the tendency for mothers, as opposed to fathers, to take this leave particularly in the early months, there are probably fewer instances in which the separation of breastfeeding mothers and their infants is necessitated by the mother's participation in the work force.

In the New Zealand context, while there is an increasing interest in the concept of family-friendly workplaces, there is a conspicuous lack of documented discussion about the integration of breastfeeding and paid employment, and the issues which this raises (Galtry, in press).[29] It is interesting, however, to speculate what impact American-driven family-friendly workplace initiatives will have on the integration of paid employment and breastfeeding in New Zealand. For instance, at a 1993 seminar "Make your Workplace 'Family Friendly'", organised by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the keynote speaker, Arlene Johnson, Vice-President of the Families and Work Institute in New York, drew attention to a number of "innovative programmes" instituted by various American companies to make their workplaces more "family friendly" (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1993). Amongst these United States-based programmes, Johnson noted a consulting firm which has a private room where mothers can use a breast pump to express milk and refrigerate it for their infants (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1993, p. 12).

Although the advocacy of such programmes may appear to represent an obvious solution to the issue of enabling women in paid work to breastfeed, it leaves the provision of such support to employer discretion alone. In effect, such recommendations can deflect attention from the need for other strategies which might better support breastfeeding among women in paid work, such as paid parental leave particularly for low-income women, mandated infant-feeding breaks, in conjunction with an emphasis on the need for a wide range of reforms and policies which support breastfeeding in specific workplaces, including the provision of childcare at or near the worksite where feasible.

Childcare Arrangements, Breastfeeding, and Mothers' Paid Employment

Much of the literature indicates that supportive childcare arrangements are of key importance in enabling women to combine breastfeeding and paid work. These issues also have implications for women's equality with men in both paid and unpaid work.

Although, as mentioned, some of the literature examining the intersection of mothers' paid employment and breastfeeding, particularly that emerging from the United States, focuses on the issues of pumping and storing breastmilk in the workplace, there is also much support for the provision of on-site childcare to facilitate breastfeeding (Anholm, 1986; Auerbach, 1993; Barber-Madden, Petschek, & Pakter, 1987; Greiner, 1990; Moore & Jansa, 1987; Morse, Bottorff, & Boman, 1989; United States Department of Health and Human Services, 1990). For instance, Moore and Jansa (1987) argue that childcare at or near the workplace, which enables the mother to actually breastfeed rather than "merely pump", is "one of the strongest supports for breastfeeding and maternal-child relationships" (p. 192). This is supported by the findings of a Canadian study (Morse, Bottorff, & Boman, 1989).

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[29] Shewell (1993) documents the example of a "breastfeeding-friendly" workplace in a New Zealand hospital (p. 28).

However, it is interesting to note that in Sweden, which has both high rates of breastfeeding and a relatively generous period of parental leave (used primarily by mothers), childcare centres are located in residential areas rather than at or near places of paid employment (as discussed in the sections on parental-leave provisions and childcare arrangements). It appears, therefore, that if parental leave is both paid and prolonged there may not be such a need for childcare to be located at or near the mother's, as opposed to the father's, workplace in order to facilitate breastfeeding. Further, this Swedish model contrasts with those recommendations which suggest that *both* on-site daycare as well as "liberal leaves of absence and maternity leaves" are crucial factors in determining the ability of mothers to integrate breastfeeding and paid employment (Anholm, 1986; Barber-Madden *et al.*, 1987, p. 534).

However, while it is easy to assume that having childcare facilities at or near the mother's worksite will facilitate breastfeeding, there may be other barriers which inhibit or prevent this practice. For instance, Auerbach (1993) suggests that it is important for mothers who intend to combine both paid employment and breastfeeding to find out whether "lunchtime breastfeeding will be *permitted* [italics added] in the [day care] center or at the day-care worker's home" (p. 402). This raises questions concerning the effectiveness of on-site childcare in facilitating breastfeeding, particularly in situations where there is no national legislation protecting breastfeeding breaks in the workplace. Further, the issue of whether such breaks are paid or not will not only impact on the effectiveness of such legislation, but may also determine whether mothers practise breastfeeding in situations where on-site childcare is available. And, as suggested by Morris (1993) and Maher (1992), in the Dutch and Italian contexts respectively, even when such protective legislation exists, the support of employers and co-workers is also vital to the ability of mothers to manage breastfeeding and paid employment.

Finally, although the need for on-site childcare is advocated by most studies examining ways in which breastfeeding can be managed in conjunction with paid employment, there are various problems related to these forms of childcare arrangements (*see* chapter 4).

The complexity of all these issues, and the tensions inherent in them are further added to when considering the issue of men and parental leave.

Men and Parental Leave

The section covering breastfeeding and parental leave indicates that parental leave can often be seen simply in terms of maternity leave. However, in a small number of countries, there is increasing interest in encouraging a greater use of parental leave by men, as well as greater male involvement in the on-going process of childcare.

Sweden

Governments in the Nordic countries, and Sweden in particular, have been at the forefront of developing policies designed to increase men's involvement in childcare, particularly in the early months of a child's life. This interest in men and their work in the private sphere has been a distinctive feature of Swedish equal opportunities policy. In 1968 the Swedish government presented a report to the United Nations Economic and Social Council arguing that role sharing in the family was needed for women's full participation in society. The interest in both gender and class equality in the 1960s was developed by the appointment of a special committee in 1972 to make recommendations on policies to increase equality between women and men, as well as the specific policy of parental leave introduced in 1974 (Rapoport & Moss, 1990).

The Swedish Act of Equality, which aims to promote equal rights between women and men within paid work, recognises that this equality also requires changes in parenthood. The Act was revised in 1994 with the following goals (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1994, p. 11):

- An equal distribution of power and influence between women and men.
- The same possibilities for women and men to achieve economic independence.
- Equal terms and conditions for women and men as regards entrepreneurship, work, terms of employment, conditions in working life and opportunities for development at work.
- Equal access for girls and boys, women and men, to education, including the same opportunities to develop personal ambitions, interests and talents.
- Equal responsibilities for women and men for work in the home and with children.
- Freedom from gender specific violence.

In Sweden men can make use of paternity leave, extended parental leave, temporary leave, and part-time work. In terms of paternity leave, in 1993 79 percent of fathers used the benefit, using on average 9 of the 10 days (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1994). The proportion of Swedish men using parental leave has increased from 3 percent in 1974, when parental insurance was introduced. The increase took place mainly in 1978, when parental leave was extended from 6 to 8 months with full parental allowance (European Commission, 1994). In the early 1980s, just over a fifth of married men used part of their parental benefit during their children's first year. Ten years later, this figure had increased to two-fifths. Another change has been that fathers are now using their leave earlier than before. In 1990, 3 out of 10 started to use their "benefit-days" as early as, or earlier than, 3 months after the child was born (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1994). One-third of fathers taking parental leave make use of the flexibility of the system, for example taking short periods of leave or part-time leave (European Commission, 1994).

Over all, however, Swedish women take substantially more parental leave than men, but temporary leave, for example to look after sick children, is more evenly used by both sexes. In addition, there is some indication that there is equal sharing of responsibility in some areas of parenting, such as the leaving and collecting of children from daycare (Näsman, 1990).

But Näsman (1990) notes that the actual hours worked by Swedish men have some correlation with the age of the child. Men with very young children work the shortest hours, and those with teenagers the longest. This contrasts with Australian time-use data which indicate that the hours spent by fathers in paid employment are longest when children are very young (Bittman, 1991), and New Zealand census data which suggest that fathers' hours of paid work vary little by the age of the child (unpublished census data). Näsman similarly suggests that men's absenteeism, like women's, also shows some correlation with the age of the youngest child, being highest for men with babies less than a year old.

Swedish research also suggests that some men take on shift work in order to spend more time with their children (European Commission, 1994).

To speed up these changes in men's work and childcare patterns, the Government appointed a Working Party on the Role of Men in 1983, which organised seminars, publications, and projects

(Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1994, p. 70). In addition it initiated a research programme on masculinity and promoted books and film productions on men's issues. In 1992, this was replaced by another working group, called Fathers, Children and Working Life. This had the task of analysing men's use of parental benefits and the possible barriers in the labour market preventing men from taking leave. As well, in 1989, the government started a campaign called Daddy Come Home. Since then, money has been provided by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs for conferences, seminars, and other information campaigns to encourage fathers to undertake a larger share of unpaid childcare (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1994).

In addition, in the last few years, projects have been developed to educate young men about childbirth and childcare. Within the existing parenthood training programmes meetings are arranged for the fathers-to-be and new fathers. As well as being taught about the process of childbirth, they are informed of their rights to parental leave; the way in which their role will change in the family is also discussed. Men are the group leaders, a factor which is seen to be important. Data indicate that fathers who have participated in these groups have taken longer periods of parental leave, on average, than other fathers (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1994).

It appears that the taking of parental leave can also, at times, be influenced by direct campaigns within the labour movement. For example, Rapoport and Moss (1990) cite a trade union campaign which resulted in an increased proportion of male union members taking leave.

And since 1 January 1995, in order to further encourage men to take up extended parental leave, the benefit applies for 12 months, with 6 explicitly set aside for the father and 6 for the mother. A parent may declare in writing that she or he passes on the right to the parental benefit to the other parent, except for a period of 30 days which cannot be transferred. The remaining 300 days can be divided between the parents in the way that best suits them.

It is important, however, to look at what discourages men from taking parental leave, especially in a child's first 6 months. Näsman (1990) provides a summary of Swedish-language literature. Factors influencing the uptake include the fact that most mothers breastfeed until at least 6 months; [30] [31] some women in low-quality jobs prefer to be home; some women do not want their partners to share the work; some families, despite the attempt to make the benefits equal, feel there are financial benefits for the man to be in paid work, and also some men report facing negative attitudes to taking leave in their workplaces. Hwang (1987) notes that employers, particularly those in the private sector, are often negative to men looking after children. In his study he found that about half of the supervisors, and about a quarter of workmates, did not like the idea of a man taking parental leave. He also found that workers in organisations where women outnumbered men were much more in favour of the father taking parental leave than workplaces where men were numerically dominant.

On the other hand, what are the factors which encourage men to take parental leave and what are the characteristics of the men who take it? The Ministry of Women's Affairs (1995), in a review of parental-leave policies, suggests that in Sweden, in terms of extended parental leave, "the single most important factor influencing men to take this leave is the income of the mother (not the relative income of the mother to father)" (p. 56). But this finding is perhaps an oversimplification of a complex issue. Näsman (1990) notes a number of findings in the Swedish-language literature which suggest that men are not only more likely to take leave if another man at the workplace has already done so, but also if they are on a salary and working in the public sector. Further, while most men approve of parental leave for men they often feel that colleagues, and supervisors in particular, do not share this view. However, 2 studies which found that it was uncommon for men to refrain from taking parental leave because of negative attitudes in the workplace are also cited (Näsman, 1990). Rapoport and Moss (1990) note that while, in general, men take far less parental leave than women, high-level employees, including women, are not great users of parental leave. They also suggest that there is a concern among some employees that taking large amounts of leave will affect their careers. This suspicion is, in fact, borne out in research by Stafford and Sundström (1994), who used the employment records of a large, geographically diverse Swedish telephone company over the period 1983-1988 to measure the effects of time out of the labour force. The results of this study suggest that there are significant costs attached to taking time out of paid work for employees, but the costs are particularly high for men. However, it was found that in the long term earnings tended to recover. According to Stafford and Sundström, some of the costs of "time out" of the work force for men are attributable to "signalling" effects, that is the perception that such men are less committed to their careers. The authors estimated that a year out of paid work for parental leave resulted in a "cost" of earnings of 1.7 percent for women and 5.2 percent for men in the years immediately following this leave.

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[30] It is interesting to note that, in general, in the countries where governments are taking an active role in encouraging men to take parental leave there are high rates of breastfeeding, while in countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, where breastfeeding rates are low, men's involvement in the care of young children care is not promoted.

[31] See family 11 in the case studies (chapter 6) for an example of a New Zealand father who took parental leave after the mother had breastfed for 6 months.

The fact that in Sweden high-level employees take little parental leave initially appears to be in conflict with Sandqvist's (1987) suggestion that the level of fathers' education is positively related to fathers' taking parental leave. However, research in Norway which indicates that men with high levels of education, but middle-range incomes, are the most common users of parental leave may provide some explanation (European Commission, 1994).

Sandqvist (1987) also notes Swedish research which indicates that not only do those men taking parental leave rate higher on the social class index but also that white collar fathers experience their parental leave more positively than blue collar fathers. With regard to the former group, Sandqvist suggests that this indicates a more liberal idea about roles for men. Sandqvist also cites work in which it was found that the higher the mother's income the more likely the father was to take parental leave.

It is Sundberg's contention (cited in European Commission, 1994) that the most important factor influencing fathers' uptake of parental leave is having a highly educated partner, which is likely to not only give her a stronger and more permanent commitment to the labour market, but also more liberal views about new family patterns and roles for parents. It therefore appears that the upholding of "egalitarian" attitudes, which are, at times, linked to higher education, may be a key factor in encouraging men to take parental leave. Over all, the European Commission (1994) suggests that:

> Parental leave is most often used and taken for longest periods by fathers: employed in the public sector; who are older; who have higher levels of education; who are employed in workplaces and in jobs (for example, childcare workers, librarians) which are predominantly female; and who have partners who are highly educated and have a high income, and are likely therefore to have a strong and permanent commitment to the labour market. Fathers least likely to take leave include men with their own businesses and who work in the police force and the fire service. (pp. 27-28)

Both Haas (1990) and Sundberg (cited in European Commission, 1994) argue that the length of leave is important if men are going to contribute more to the long-term care of children.

> Several reports show that the length of Parental Leave used by men is of vital importance. Men who only stay at home for a couple of weeks do not get involved in how the domestic care is done, do not find their own way to care for the child and do not share this work more equally in the future. It is essential that men are induced to stay at home with their small children for at least three months. Only then will men find time to organise the daily childcare and domestic work in their own way. (Sundberg, cited in European Commission, 1994, p. 28).

It is difficult to determine the overall effect of Swedish policies on men sharing childcare work. Although international comparisons are fraught with methodological problems, Juster and Stafford (1991) report that the time spent by Swedish (and Norwegian) men in housework, including routine chores, home projects, and childcare, is substantially higher than in the United States. Female labour-force participation in Sweden has also been higher than all other OECD countries, including countries such as France which have well-developed, and heavily subsidised provision of childcare. With the exception of Ireland, Swedish fertility rates in the 1980s and early 1990s have also been higher than those of other European countries. This is unusual when seen in conjunction with the high labour-force participation. In addition, a number of researchers suggest that stresses on families, and particularly women, of combining work and family life have been reduced (Haas, 1990; Näsman, 1990; Sandqvist, 1992). Nevertheless, there remains a significant income gap between Swedish women and men, women still specialise in unpaid work and men in paid work, and within paid work there are substantial industry and occupation differences between women and men (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1994).

Norway and Finland

Although Nordic countries are often portrayed as having similar social policies and attitudes there are, in fact, some major differences between them in relation to the provision and use of parental leave.

In Finland, fathers accounted for only 2 percent of parental-leave days taken, but in 1991 45 percent of fathers took paternity leave (European Commission, 1994).

In Norway, in 1987 less than 1 percent of fathers used the period of paid parental leave. However, total statutory parental leave at that time was only 33 weeks. Those men taking leave tended to have high levels of education, middle incomes, and were mainly employed in the public sector. In addition, the partners of these men tended to have similar job and education characteristics (European Commission, 1994).

Studies in Norway and Denmark also suggest that the uptake of parental leave by men is more likely if both partners have above-average levels of income and education. These factors usually indicate that both parents have strong bargaining power in the labour market, and also that the mother has a stronger negotiating position in the family (European Commission, 1994). In addition, these studies confirm that men are more likely to take leave from workplaces that are predominantly female, and also from those workplaces which are part of the public sector.

Other European Countries

The philosophy of parental leave was developed in the European Community in the early 1980s based around the goal of equal opportunities in paid work (European Commission, 1994). However, while the developers of the policies wanted to ensure that the policies did not marginalise women, they have been more reluctant than Swedish policy makers to develop policies which may be seen as impinging directly on decisions made within a family setting. This mixture of encouraging social change along with a reluctance to develop policies which may actually bring about change is shown in article 6 of a 1992 Council of Ministers' recommendation on childcare which states that:

> It is recommended that Member States should promote and encourage, with due respect for freedom of the individual, increased participation by men (in the care and upbringing of children), in order to achieve a more equal sharing of parental responsibilities between men and women (European Commission, 1994, p. 9).

The European Commission (1994) has gathered together information from EC countries on men's use of parental leave, but the data are very incomplete. However, it does indicate that men's use of parental leave appeared to be very low compared with that of Sweden.

The reasons for the low use of parental leave by Danish men has been the subject of recent research. A study carried out in 1990 indicated it would cost the family more if the father took leave; the length of leave is too short with most mothers still breastfeeding during the initial 10-week period; problems within the workplace, and, in many households, the possibility of the father taking leave was never discussed (European Commission, 1994).

Further work in 1993 in Denmark identified some other work-force factors (European Commission, 1994). It was found that while workplaces generally are well disposed to paternity leave they are not so favourable to longer parental leave and, more specifically, "men take less leave and time to care for sick children in workplaces characterised by direct competition between workers and a weak culture of solidarity between the workforce" (European Commission, 1994, p. 25). In addition, it was found that fathers are more likely to take leave if they are employed in the public sector, are well educated and have good incomes, and their partners are also well educated and have good incomes.

But Danish research (European Commission, 1994, p. 26) also draws attention to 2 other important points:

- Official leave is only part of the way men take time off from paid employment when they have children. One Danish study on parental leave found that fathers not using official leave in fact spent 8 weeks at home during their child's first year, while those taking official leave spent 14 weeks at home, yet only 5-6 weeks was parental leave. Many Danish fathers use their holidays, take time off in lieu, or adapt their working hours, doing evening work for example, in order to prolong their leave. It is suggested that fathers may want to be more involved in the care of their children than statistics suggest. These are individualised solutions, however, which only the most powerful groups in the workplace can bargain for themselves.
- Workplaces may become used to men taking leave, but less ready to accept that they continue to have family responsibilities after the official leave has been taken.

Using the experience of Denmark and Sweden, the European Commission (1994) suggests a number of conditions are needed if more men are to take parental leave.

> 1. **Payment**: Parents taking leave must be compensated for all, or nearly all, of their lost earnings; otherwise, no parent can afford to take leave or, if one income can be foregone, there will be a strong economic case for making this the lower income which, given current income inequalities between men and women, will usually be the mother. Payment to parents on statutory leave should come from public funds . . . to ensure individual employers do not carry a disproportionate cost; that individual workers are not put at risk of discrimination, and because society at large has an interest in the objectives to which leave arrangements may contribute.
>
> 2. **Length**: The longer the Parental Leave period, the more likely men are to take it (up to a certain point at least). Few men will take leave while a child is under 6 months. . . . Short periods at home may be worthwhile for other reasons, but they do not enable men to develop confidence and competence in [the care of children]; to this end, it is important that men are encouraged and supported to take a more substantial period, at least 3 months.
>
> 3. **Concurrent leave taking**: At present, it is usual for Parental Leave arrangements to permit only one parent at a time to take leave. However, this may be too restrictive, particularly in the early months after birth when both parents may want to spend some time together with their new child; moreover, fathers who want to take an active role in caring for their new baby may feel inhibited from taking Parental Leave while the baby is still being breast-fed if this means that the mother has to resume employment. For these reasons, there is a case for enabling both parents to take some portion of leave **concurrently**, either through altering the conditions of Parental Leave, or by developing Paternity Leave so that it can be taken at any time during a child's early months.
>
> 4. **Non-transferability**: There is a strong case for at least part of the Parental Leave being made an individual and non-transferable right. . . .
>
> 5. **Flexibility**: It has been argued . . . that men are more likely to take Parental Leave where arrangements have a high degree of flexibility, for example the possibility to take leave on a part-time basis . . .
>
> 6. **A broad strategy**: Men may be more likely to take [Parental] Leave in the context of a general policy to promote increased participation by men in the care of children. . . .
>
> 7. **Employers, trades unions and the work environment**: . . . the individual workplace may play an important role in promoting [or inhibiting] the use of leave arrangements by fathers. . . . (pp. 39-40).

In addition to the above conditions, some researchers have suggested more positive action by giving men higher financial compensation during a transition phase.

The Commission argues that there is a need to monitor and research the uptake of leave by men. It also notes that ". . . there may be many reasons why a father does not take leave. If he does not do so, it does not mean that he is uncaring about his children. He may be substantially involved in caring for his children, finding other ways of spending time with them". The Commission further suggests it is important not to assume that working-class or ethnic minority fathers "are less concerned fathers" because they are less likely to take leave (European Commission, 1994, p. 40). The taking of leave, according to the Commission, is just one means of supporting fathers and enabling them to spend more time with their children, and it is not an "infallible measure of paternal involvement" (p. 40). Finally, the Commission suggests that many of the conditions proposed for increasing men's use of leave will also benefit women.

In 1990 the European Commission Network on Childcare held a seminar exploring issues of men's involvement in childcare, including the early months of a child's life (European Commission, 1990). The seminar reached a number of conclusions including:

> 1. Increasing men's participation in the care of children is important for women, children and men themselves. . . .
>
> 2. Although there was widespread agreement on the need for men to be more involved in the care of children, it was also recognised that this prospect raised a number of anxieties and concerns - for example, about child abuse, about men invading 'women's space' and being too dominant, about fathers taking over the more rewarding and pleasant child care tasks. . . .
>
> 3. There are some hopeful indications that men's attitudes towards childcare are changing, albeit slowly. . . . (pp. 5-7).

The report, in noting that there was a wide range of obstacles to change, suggests that "these obstacles can be grouped under three main headings: psychological, economic and employment constraints. They operate at different levels - individual, family, workplace, societal" (p. 8). In particular, the conference participants felt that men will not take up long periods of leave unless compensated for all, or a high proportion, of lost earnings. The report also noted that a short period of parental leave discourages men's uptake of it in a society where breastfeeding is widely supported.

In 1993 there was a follow-up conference which, although focusing on men's involvement in childcare in general, also had implications for leave policies (European Commission, 1993). The broad conclusions were:

> 1. There is an urgent need for change, to increase men's participation in the care and upbringing of children. Change has potential benefits for children and women, as well as men - but also potential risks and disadvantages which must be recognised and taken into account.
>
> 2. Change - of expectations, attitudes, behaviour - is already occurring, although it is not uniform, either between or within countries. . . . It is not a case of whether or not change should happen, but rather what type of change will occur, how far and fast it will go and to what extent it can be mediated by policy and other interventions.
>
> 3. Increased participation by men in the care of children implies new roles, new identities and new relationships for men and women. Some women may not

> want change; many feel ambivalent.[32] Strategies must recognise that change is a sensitive issue, for men and women, capable of generating negative feelings. . . .
>
> 4. Change takes place at many levels and in different settings (the family, services, the workplace, the wider community); support for change must also take place at different levels and settings. Change is promoted by informal practices, negotiations and relationships and by formal interventions, such as law, policies and programmes. . . .
>
> 5. . . . points to be considered when developing a strategy to encourage and support change . . . include: analysis of the context within which change is sought; recognition of difference (for example, class and ethnicity); supporting existing informal processes and networks; targeting 'golden opportunities in life' when men and women are more responsive; providing role models; finding appropriate and effective incentives; and recognition that change will take a long time and require sustained support.
>
> 6. . . . A range of interventions have already been tried and supported by men and women (although there are few examples of workplace measures). . . .
>
> 7. . . . men have caring responsibilities throughout adult life. If men are to increase their participation in all forms of caring, a life-course perspective must be adopted. This requires redistribution of paid and unpaid work not only between men and women and the employed and unemployed but also over the individual's adult life. (pp. 4-5).

There was general agreement that one of the major points in which change can be made is the transition to first-time parenthood. The participants of the seminar felt that new role models were needed to encourage change. They suggested that the role models can be individuals, families, workplaces, services, and societies where more equal sharing has been achieved or is being seriously worked towards.

The United States

In contrast to some European countries there has been little direct official support in the United States for men to share in the care of children.

Pleck (1989) argues that data indicate that relatively few fathers take advantage of long-term parental-leave policies, even when paid. However, substantially higher proportions of fathers take short-term parental leave, often through the use of their vacation and sick leave, but including as well some use of undocumented informal leave. Pleck suggests that in the United States, although relatively small numbers of fathers appear to take advantage of formal parental-leave policies, those wanting such leave have, at times, been treated differently from women. This includes situations where men have had to take employers to court or mediation boards to obtain such benefits.

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[32] For further discussion of the issue *see* Callister (1994).

Pleck notes that some fathers may be more likely to take leave time when the infant is older rather than immediately after birth, because they do not feel particularly competent dealing with babies. According to Pleck, many corporations openly state that they consider it inappropriate for a father to use paternity leave. In a 1986 Catalyst study (cited in Pleck, 1989, p. 34), 63 percent of all companies, when asked what length of leave it would be reasonable for a father to take, stated that "no amount of time was reasonable". Further, even within the subgroup of companies officially offering unpaid paternity leave, 41 percent made the same response. Catalyst also found that firms do not notify men that they are entitled to take parental leave. It appeared that many companies extended unpaid parental leave to both parents to avoid the appearance of discriminating on the basis of sex, not because they wanted, or expected, fathers to use paternity leave. And supporting these observations, Shelton (1992), in her study of paid and unpaid work in the United States, found that men who stayed home to care for a child were far more likely than women to be asked by employers to explain their behaviour.

Pleck (1993), in later writings, suggests that men tend to disguise their commitment to their family. He contends that American men do not want to take official parental leave. He suggests 2 principles influence the use men in the United States make of family-supportive policies, including leave around the birth of a child. He argues that men use policies if they do not reduce their earnings or undermine their role as breadwinners, and do not cause them to be viewed as uncommitted to paid work or seen as unmasculine.

New Zealand

While a number of New Zealand writers have argued for more male involvement in childcare (Gray, 1983; Kedgley, 1985; Novitz, 1987; Smith, 1990), equality issues in the workplace have not been, in general, strongly connected to debates about inequalities in the home. As already discussed, there has been a reluctance, at the level of government policy, to seem to be interfering with decisions made within households.

In the last decade in New Zealand there has been a dramatic increase in the number of fathers of young children, particularly those under the age of 1, who are not in paid work. This is especially so for Pacific Islands and Maori men. Rather than taking voluntary parental leave, unemployment has placed them in the position of having a period of involuntary leave. In contrast with Swedish men who take voluntary parental leave, these New Zealand men are likely to have low levels of education, are with partners who similarly have low levels of education, and may hold "traditional" values concerning appropriate sex roles and responsibilities (Callister, 1995).

In the specific area of parental leave, until the passing of the 1987 Parental Leave Act, leave was aimed solely at women. However, the 1987 Act is more gender neutral, and recent campaigns for paid parental leave have focused more on "parents" rather than on mothers only.

The Campaign for 12 Weeks Paid Parental Leave argues that the payment should be set at 100 percent of earnings, although limited to the average male wage. The campaign suggests that this payment rate would encourage more men to take up child-rearing responsibilities because it allows the family to choose what is best for them, rather than being constrained by which parent is earning more (12 Weeks Paid Parental Leave Campaign).

In the workplace, there have been limited examples of encouragement of men taking parental leave. For example, in the foreword to the study of parental leave in the Customs Department, the Comptroller states:

> It seems likely that, in line with trends in society generally, increasing numbers of men will choose to undertake a greater share of childcare responsibilities. This is a matter between them and their partners, and Customs will encourage men who

> make this choice by making them aware of their rights and opportunities. We see this as a contribution to equal opportunities both for men and women who wish to continue their paid work careers. (Glendining, 1992, Foreword)

In this study, 49 women and 1 man took parental leave over a 6-year period. Partners of women generally limited their leave time to annual or sick leave at the time of the birth, with an example given of a mother having difficulty persuading her partner to take even 1 day off his paid work.

In a set of recommendations from the study, Glendining (1992) suggests that the department needs to be more supportive of men taking parental leave. In a more general recommendation, she notes that there needs to be more community education to encourage and assist fathers, and potential fathers, to see parenting as a partnership, and "partake equally in the joys and hassles of practical caring for their children" (p. 31).

But Habgood (1992a), using New Zealand data, argues that for men to succeed in paid employment "there are strong pressures on them **not** to develop, and to even reject the skills associated with the performance of emotional labour". She adds that society, in defining masculinity, emphasises "values of competitiveness, strength, privacy, conformity, the valuing of a tangible product, of status and hierarchy, and of not showing weakness". Therefore, according to Habgood, "it is not OK to be an actively caring man, to show feelings of empathy, or to be emotionally open or intimate" and that men "in doing so, risk derision and labelling as wimps" (p. 113). If this is so, then this will work against men taking more parental leave in New Zealand.

In New Zealand, as yet, it is not known what proportion of men take parental leave or the length of such leave. However, chapter 6 provides an example of a father taking an extended period of leave.

The Costs and Benefits of Parental Leave

All OECD countries have parental-leave schemes, but there are considerable differences in how they operate. Some of these issues have been briefly explored in previous sections. In addition, detailed descriptions of the leave schemes of particular countries can be found in a number of recent publications (European Commission, 1994; Labour Party, 1994; Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1995).

In examining the costs and benefits of parental-leave schemes it is also important to note that they do not stand alone from other family-support schemes and policies, such as childcare subsidies, tax regimes, equal opportunities legislation, and laws regarding part-time work.

It is also worth noting that this is a very complex area of public policy. Heitlinger (1993) provides a useful summary of the multiple issues needing to be addressed when examining the provision of parental leave.

> It involves health protection for working mothers and their children, equal opportunities for women workers, equal rights for men, family income replacement, the responsibilities of employers and the state towards parents and children, the care of young children, and a whole range of employment issues. From a feminist perspective, the fundamental components of an optimal maternity policy for women in the workforce are access to adequate antenatal and birthing care (a health policy, gender specific issue); occupational health and safety, protection against unfair dismissal, the right to be transferred during pregnancy and in the early postnatal period to easier work without loss of pay and seniority, job-protected leave from work for the pre-, intra- and postnatal period during which the mother (or, in the

> case of parental leave, the father) is unable to perform her (his) regular job (gender-specific as well as gender neutral employment issues); and a cash benefit while the parent is on leave (social security issue, in theory gender neutral). Such a policy also needs to promote a general social consensus that childbearing and the rearing of the next generation concern the whole of society rather than just the parents. (pp. 191-192)

In New Zealand the Ministry of Women's Affairs (1995) also discusses the multiple policy objectives of parental leave, some of which are, at times, in conflict.

In general the costs and benefits of having, and alternatively not having, parental leave are potentially faced by a range of groups. These are:

- parents,
- children,
- employers,
- employees,
- society, and
- government.

The cost of caring for children is an unavoidable cost and has to be faced by someone. Determining who pays for, and/or who does the work of childcare, involves the long-standing issue of the division of labour/ financial responsibility within families, including situations where one parent, usually the father, is absent. But, in many countries, the issue of "who pays for childcare" is seen as part of wider debates about the boundaries of responsibility for looking after children between the family, state, and employers. As already discussed in the section on equality and difference, there are a range of views on the boundary between the state and families in different countries. In analysing costs and benefits there are also various equity issues. These include equity between women and men, and within groups of women and within groups of men.

Parents

Unpaid Leave

If one parent, usually the mother, leaves paid work when a child is born, they potentially face the following costs:

- Loss of earnings. In 2-parent families this often lowers family earnings, unless the partner works longer hours to compensate, while in 1-parent families also, it usually involves a reduction in income if a benefit becomes the alternative source of income. There are both the short-term losses of taking the leave, and then long-term losses from having been away from paid work or from returning to work on a part-time basis, both of which can be very large (Spalter-Roth & Hartmann, 1990).
- Loss of on-job training opportunities.[33]
- Depreciation of skills and experience and, at times, loss of confidence about participating in paid work.
- Potentially downward job mobility, including perhaps working part time, on returning to paid work.[34]

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[33] Some jobs, however, may have minimal training opportunities.

[34] This is assuming there is potential for downward mobility. Some employees will already be in low-paid, and low-status occupations.

- Additional costs of job search, and possible unintended unemployment when wishing to re-enter the paid work force.
- Loss of work-related benefits, such as subsidised health care, superannuation, and length of service-related benefits.[35]
- In 2-parent families, if it is the mother who leaves paid work, and the father who becomes the main breadwinner, traditional roles are reinforced and may be difficult to change at a later time (Habgood, 1992b). Having these traditional roles reinforced can represent a cost for both parents, particularly if the relationship eventually dissolves (Blau & Ferber, 1986). But the long-term costs in terms of lifetime earnings, and provision for retirement and old age, are particularly evident for women who have assumed the role of primary caregiver (Horsfield, 1988; Spalter-Roth & Hartmann, 1990; Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1995).

The cost of having unpaid time out of the work force will vary between parents, and between families. The actual cost in terms of lost earnings will generally be higher for men than women, because of the "pay gap" between men and women,[36] and will be higher for women on high incomes than for those on low incomes. But for higher-income parents it may be a cost they can bear. For others, such as low-income earners, or sole family earners, the cost of any lost income may be unsustainable and therefore unpaid leave may not be an option for them.

However, not having the option to take time off can represent a cost to some individual parents and families, although this is often more difficult to quantify. For both mothers and fathers these costs may be in terms of an inability to "bond". Alternatively, for mothers who wish to breastfeed but cannot afford leave, and whose workplaces do not accommodate breastfeeding, these costs are possibly also seen in terms of the inability to "choose" their preferred method of infant feeding.

Conflicts over reconciling the responsibilities of paid employment and family also represent potential costs of not taking leave. At times, mental and/or physical health (Gjerdingen, Froberg, Chaloner, & McGovern, 1993), as well as performance in paid work, may suffer.

Parental leave appears to offer some major benefits to parents, particularly to women, who want, or need, some time away from their paid work, but also want or need to retain attachment to the work force and, in particular, to their previous employer.[37] [38] [39] According to human capital theory, tenure in paid work has a major impact on productivity and earnings. In the United States, Shapiro and Mott (1994) found that women most attached to the labour force, that is those who were in paid work in the 6 months before, and within 6 months after, the birth of a child, showed relatively few changes in their paid work patterns over a subsequent 14 years. In 1987, 14 to 19 years after their first birth, these women received a substantial wage premium compared to women less attached to the labour market. While this study suggests that women are rewarded for showing little "difference" in paid employment behaviour from men, the authors also argued that human capital and the costs of entry to and exit from the labour force do not rule out moving out of paid work around the birth of a child. But they suggest that those women with a strong attachment to paid work, if given the opportunity to retain their ties to employment, will minimise the duration of periods of withdrawal from work, maintaining substantially continuous work careers. Research in Britain also indicates that maternity leave assists women to remain attached to the labour market (Waldfogel, 1995). This British longitudinal research in the late 1980s indicated that mothers aged between 24-44 who returned to their original employers after childbirth earned higher wages than other mothers. Although, in part, this effect was due to higher qualifications and job seniority, these women still had higher pay after controlling for these factors. Waldfogel argues one reason for this is that women who return are seen as committed and therefore more likely to advance in the labour market. In a review of parental-leave literature, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (1995) also found that there is a strong relationship between access to parental leave and favourable labour-market outcomes for mothers, with women who use leave provisions much more likely to return to paid employment with most of them returning to their previous employer.

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[35] Again, like training opportunities, some jobs may have few, if any, work-related benefits (*see* section on part-time work).

[36] Although the "pay gap" between men and women before the birth of their first child may in fact be relatively small.

[37] For most women a short period of parental leave must be taken to allow sufficient time for recovery following childbirth. The length of such leave is open to debate, and in part depends on the birth experience. For example, a significant number of American women are back at paid work within a week of birth (chapter 7).

[38] The benefits of remaining "attached" to one employer also depend on the state of the labour market. For example, in a period of "full employment" re-entry into paid work may be relatively easy.

[39] It should be noted that parental leave is about the right to return to paid work as much as the right to take leave.

Shapiro and Mott (1994) also claim that there is evidence that sustained plans for labour-market work later in life contribute to higher earnings, over and above the contribution to earnings of increased work experience. They suggest that women growing up in a situation where maternity leave is expected, as opposed to having to resign from their paid work, would be much better able to plan for "careers".[40] This view is supported by Waldfogel (1995) who, in the British context, suggests that the existence of maternity leave has been one factor in the very rapid increase in the work-force participation by mothers of young children. However, Stafford and Sundström (1994) suggest that time is valued in different ways in different countries, with a particularly high career cost associated with "time out" to look after children in the United States. Schor's (1991) observations in the United States context also support this analysis.

Statutory parental leave also potentially expands the range of occupations considered by parents to be compatible with both childrearing and market work. In particular, the availability of parental leave can shift the choices of women away from female-dominated occupations. Women, and, at times, men, may therefore choose occupations that they would have previously rejected because these occupations provided neither leave nor easy exit and re-entry. Women's employment position would then potentially improve for 2 related reasons. They would enter the higher paid, traditionally male-dominated occupations - occupations previously rejected despite their higher wages. If more women were to enter male-dominated occupations, pressures in the female-dominated occupations would ease. In turn, as supply to the female-dominated occupations decreased, the wages there would increase.

However, at times, parents may also be constrained in their labour-market "choices" if they are to qualify for statutory parental leave.[41] In New Zealand, for example, a potential parent may not wish to change jobs, work part time, or on short-term contracts in the eligibility period before the birth as they may then no longer be eligible for parental leave.

But there are also potential costs to parents of having parental leave available. With parental leave in general, but maternity leave in particular, there is the potential for women to face discrimination in the work force, both before and after having children (Bergmann, 1986), and even if not planning to have children (Folbre, 1994). This is discussed more fully in the section covering employers.

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[40] Much of the literature is dominated by a "careerist" emphasis, with the idea that most women, and men, have interesting, well-paid jobs.

[41] "Choices" are also likely to be constrained by a range of other factors such as the state of the labour market, the availability of good-quality, affordable childcare, and the number of children.

In New Zealand, it is not possible to gauge support amongst parents for statutory parental leave as such a survey has yet to be carried out.

Paid Leave

The major benefit of paid leave is that it can significantly reduce the cost of taking time out of paid work. For some parents having leave paid may be the only way they can afford to take time away from their paid work. In addition, there is an equity issue between women and men, with unpaid leave in a 2-parent family usually requiring 1 parent to become economically dependent on the other, involving all the potential drawbacks of such dependency (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1995). For women, the costs of economic dependency can be high (Briar, 1992; Horsfield, 1988; Hyman, 1994), but these issues for men are, as yet, not well documented.

However, some of the costs faced by parents in taking unpaid leave, such as the loss of on-job training, may also be faced by those with paid leave. In Sweden, for example, Stafford and Sundström (1994) found evidence of long-term loss of earnings for women and men, even though the payment for parental leave was almost at full-income replacement levels.

Sundström and Stafford (1992) argue that having paid parental leave, with the payment set at a proportion of income, also encourages women to develop their "careers" before having children, including working full time before the birth.

It has been suggested that paid parental leave has the potential to encourage the concept of a shared family responsibility for children, with men having the opportunity to take a greater role. For example, in New Zealand the Labour Party (1994) have argued that the

> . . . current system encourages the 'men as breadwinner' mentality, which has the effect of encouraging women to stay at home. By not offering wage replacement, men are less likely to take leave because they are still seen as the breadwinner. The wage gap between men and women contributes to this because the family will generally be better off if the father stays at work. (p. 6)

The campaign for 12 weeks' paid parental leave (12 Weeks Paid Parental Leave Campaign, 1994) has also suggested that payment set at 100 percent of earnings, although limited to the average male wage, would encourage more men to take up child-rearing responsibilities because it allows the family to choose what is best for them, rather than being constrained by which parent is earning more.

The incentive for men to take leave is theoretically greater if the payment is set at a high proportion of previous earnings rather than at a set rate because of the earnings gap between women and men. Men can also theoretically be encouraged to take leave by a rationing process, if leave is allocated specifically to the father and cannot be transferred to the mother. Although, as already discussed, paid leave may be one important factor in encouraging more men to take parental leave, the factors influencing men's participation in childcare are complex, with many factors beyond the influence of government.[42]

But the provision of paid parental leave raises some further important equity issues between families. Depending on how such leave is structured, and how it is funded, the potential exists for the benefits to be "captured" by the middle class, supporting those already in "core" jobs.

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[42] In addition, there appear to be many non-monetary disincentives to men becoming primary caregivers (Callister, 1994).

For instance, a significant number of parents may not be in paid work before the birth of a child, or may be in "non-standard" employment. This time out of paid work could be for a variety of reasons: they have just returned to paid work after time off to look after a previous child, or because they are involved in seasonal work ,[43] self-employed, or on short-term contracts. They may also not be in paid work because they are unemployed, or perhaps because they are looking after children or other dependants.

If a minimum number of hours of work per week, and/or years worked, as well as stability of employer, are set criteria determining eligibility for leave, some parents will then not qualify. Those particularly affected will usually be people who are already not strongly attached to the labour force, or workers who already face disadvantages in the labour market such as those with low levels of industry-based training. As discussed in a United States context, having a minimum size of employer can also make a significant proportion of parents ineligible on the basis of class and race (Vogel, 1993).[44] While this is a problem in the case of unpaid leave, the inequalities are further entrenched with paid leave.

Providing a payment for parental leave, if based on recent employment history, clearly creates some difficult equity issues. This is especially so if the payments are a percentage of previous incomes, as in Sweden, and if they are funded from general taxation. Such a policy would mean that, unless there was a cap on such payments, the highest parental-leave payment would potentially go to those who are likely to have the highest levels of human capital, and who tend, anyway, to be in the best negotiating positions in the marketplace.[45] Further, parents in 2-parent families tend to have similar educational qualifications therefore the highest payments for parental leave would be likely to go to those couples in which the other partner also has high earnings (Callister, 1994).[46] [47]

In New Zealand the Employers' Federation has argued against paid parental leave for a number of reasons (Department of Labour, 1986). One of the main critiques is because it would involve the government unnecessarily subsidising 2-income families. However, while there has been an increase in the number of 2-income families over the last few decades, family types and patterns in labour-market participation have changed dramatically in a range of directions within the last 20 years (Statistics New Zealand, 1994). For example, there are 2-parent families in which the father is unable to participate in paid work, or is on a very low income, while the mother is the main income earner. In some of these situations the mother may wish to breastfeed in the first months of the baby's life before passing care over to father.[48]

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[43] However, Harbridge (1994) notes an example from the New Zealand meat industry where employers have recognised this problem in relation to seasonal work. In addition, Harbridge suggests that 25 percent of all contracts in his database were above legislative standard, with the majority covering the public service, and many of these have improved eligibility clauses.

[44] In the 1991 census partnered Maori and Pacific Islands mothers with a child under 1 were more likely than "other" mothers to be "unemployed and seeking work" (*see* chapter 7). This indicates that Maori and Pacific Islands women may have less access to parental leave than "other" mothers.

[45] For example, this could mean that, on average, the men who took paid leave had higher levels of payment that women taking leave.

[46] For example, according to 1991 census data for 2-parent families with a child under 5, if the mother has a university qualification then in 57 percent of couples the father will also have a university qualification. In addition, a further 24 percent of partners will have other tertiary-level qualifications. If the mother has no qualification then only 2 percent of partners will have a university qualification, but with a further 30 percent having some form of other tertiary qualification. Income levels are very much related to qualifications (Callister, 1994).

[47] This presents less of a problem in times of "full employment" and when wage differentials for skill are compressed as used to be the situation in Sweden.

[48] In this situation, while the mother could not receive a benefit, if the woman's husband or de facto partner was prepared to make himself available for, and actively seek, full-time work he would be eligible to claim an unemployment benefit even if the mother was "technically" still employed in paid work (Social Policy Agency,

A period of unpaid leave with a guaranteed job may, at times, enable her to do this, but a period of paid leave is more likely to make such an option feasible. Alternatively, an employed sole mother may wish to take a period of leave but may be unable to afford to do so if this leave is unpaid.[49]

Another way of paying for parents to look after children at home is by means of a caregiver's wage, which could be seen as extended parental leave, but without a guarantee of paid employment when it ends. There are both costs and benefits to this approach.

Folbre (1994 p. 258), for example, argues as part of a 10-point plan for improving the situation of children in the United States, that there should be public compensation for the value of family labour. She suggests that "regardless of income level, or biological relationship, all those who devote time and energy to caring for children, the sick, or the elderly outside the market economy should receive some remuneration". She suggests this could take the form of family allowances or tax credits for the family or community work. However, she argues that the provision of personal household services to healthy working-age adults should not be subsidised.

While arguing that a person looking after children at home should receive some remuneration out of general taxation, Folbre also contends that other family members need to face the obligations of providing for children. She notes that "any person who specialises in non-market family labor should enjoy explicit claims on the market income of other family members" (Folbre, 1994, p. 258).

In a New Zealand context, Dann (1992) asserts that the "re-valuing tendency" of feminism, with its focus on achieving equality with men in paid work, "must look more seriously at the physical state of the world today, with its rapidly increasing population and rapidly decreasing or degrading natural resources" (p. 349). According to Dann, a number of "Green" advocates have better mechanisms of "liberation", with an example of paying everyone a minimum living income. She suggests that a minimum living income would have a number of positive effects, particularly for women. For example, "those who are currently doing unpaid work (care of dependants and community work), would have greater security and freedom to continue in this useful work, while still being free to earn more by participating in the paid workforce and/or improving their lifestyle by participating more actively in the informal economy of Do-it-Yourself or barter and exchange" (p. 349).

Dann (1992) also suggests that a minimum living income would be good for both society as a whole, and the environment. For example, it would "make it more practicable for fathers to be active parents" (p. 350). The concept of a universal basic income is also supported by Briar (1995) and Rankin (1992). Briar felt that it would not only provide an income for carers, such as parents looking after children either on short-term parental leave or in the longer term, but could also be used by a range of other people including students. Rankin (1992), in arguing for such a benefit in conjunction with a more progressive tax system, suggests that the main groups who would benefit would be "part-time workers and mothers at home" (p. 204).

The major advantages of a universal basic income are that it would be a gender-neutral payment, as well as giving equal benefits to parents whether or not they qualify for parental leave.

Department of Social Welfare, personal communication 1 September, 1995).

[49] In this scenario the woman would be entitled to receive a domestic purposes benefit during the period of unpaid leave provided she met the other qualifying criteria. If she returned to full-time employment at a later date then her benefit would be cancelled. In addition, the standard bonus benefit, paid out to some employees who return from parental leave for 6 months, would only affect the payment of benefit if she was in receipt of a benefit at the time the bonus was paid (Social Policy Agency, Department of Social Welfare, personal communication, 1 September 1995).

The Australian government has introduced a caregiver's allowance from 1 July 1995 (Working Nation: Policies and Programs, 1994). The allowance is available for those whose primary activity is looking after dependent children below the age of 16. The Australian government argued that the new parenting allowance was needed to provide a suitable payment for those spouses whose primary activity is caring for children. It suggested it was not reasonable to expect these people to look for full-time paid work while also looking after children. The report argued that the parenting allowance is vital for increasing the incentive for one partner of an unemployed couple to accept a low-paid job.

While it is not possible to gauge support for unpaid leave in New Zealand, one recent survey asked a question about paid leave. The national opinion poll carried out in 1994 found that just under half of those surveyed agreed that women in paid employment should receive paid maternity leave when they have a baby, while just over a third disagreed with such payment (Gendall & Russell, 1995).[50]

Funding of Paid Leave - Implications for Parents

The method of funding paid parental leave clearly has implications for a number of groups, including parents. For example, an Australian study on paid maternity leave, published in 1993 by the National Women's Consultative Council, argues the following (Smith, 1994):

- Schemes funded by employers could create a disincentive to employing women of childbearing age, increase casualisation, and were likely to benefit only well-paid women. They would also be difficult for small firms. (This is discussed further in the section on employers.)
- Funding by government may benefit women in both low- and high-paid work. However, it could be subject to income tests and so become a targeted payment not linked to employment.
- Funding by individual employees, through voluntary savings, loans, or private insurance, would be an option available only to more highly paid women who could afford to make savings, and may only be possible for a first child.
- One of the problems of a social insurance scheme is that it potentially requires contributions from people who may not benefit from it.

In discussing the social insurance option O'Reagan (cited in Smith, 1994) notes that, unlike Australia, New Zealand already has a social insurance scheme (ACC - Accident Rehabilitation and Compensation Insurance Corporation) that could be redrawn to include parental leave. She argues that this option would also give women greater access to funds channelled through it. According to O'Reagan, in the year ended June 1992, 73 percent of ACC compensation went to men, compared with 23 percent to women.[51] O'Reagan argues that while a temporary inability to be in paid work for a man is likely to come from an accident, it is much more likely to be pregnancy for a woman. This raises the issue of whether pregnancy and childbirth should be viewed as disabilities, an issue discussed in the section on equality and difference.

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[50] While there was little difference between the views of women and men, age was an important variable. In the under 30 age group, support for paid leave was much higher with 65 percent supporting such a payment and 20 percent against. The lack of difference between women's and men's views is perhaps surprising given that men tended to hold more "traditional" views on the roles of mothers of young children in paid work in other parts of the survey. This survey was undertaken as part of an international study. In comparison, while just under half of the New Zealand sample agreed with paid maternity leave, 74 percent of the American sample supported such leave (T. Smith, personal communication, March 1995), while in Sweden 88 percent supported the idea of paid leave (Edlund, Sundström, & Svallfors, 1994).

[51] According to the ACC annual report for the financial year of 1993-94, 62 percent of the recipients of ACC payments were men.

Children

Benefits of parental leave to children tend not to be explicitly set out in the parental-leave literature. This is probably due to the fact that the issue of whether children benefit from parents' taking time out of paid work to look after young children is extremely complex, often difficult to specifically quantify, and an area with highly divergent opinions. There are physiological, psychological, and developmental aspects to consider. When the benefits are discussed they are mostly in relation to the mother, rather than the father, spending time with their children.

The issue of child health provides an example of the complexities of, and the difficulties involved in, attempting to determine potential benefits of parental leave. For example, several studies have indicated that children in out-of-home childcare are more likely to contract a number of relatively minor infectious diseases, although these may have little long-term effect (Berg, Shapiro, & Capobianco, 1991; Jarman & Kohlenberg, 1991). However, reviews of childcare and child health studies, mainly carried out in the United States, indicate that under the age of 3 years, children attending daycare may be up to 8 times at greater risk of contracting *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) than other children, with the risk increasing with the number of hours spent at daycare, and also higher in the first month of daycare attendance (Berg, Shapiro, & Capobianco, 1991; Jarman & Kohlenberg, 1991; Takala & Clements, 1992). In turn, children who are infected by invasive Hib are more likely to contract the serious illnesses of meningitis and pneumonia (Public Health Commission, 1994a). For Hib, however, immunisation may be a better protector of child health, and more cost effective for governments, than providing statutory parental leave.

Alternatively, in some situations a child may be at greater health risk by being at home with a parent. Examples could include situations in which a parent is a heavy smoker; where the parent is under extreme stress and cannot provide adequate childcare or is perhaps violent; or where there is inadequate and overcrowded housing (Berg, Shapiro, & Capobianco, 1991; Jarman & Kohlenberg, 1991; Takala & Clements, 1992). In turn, government spending may reduce some of these problems, such as through the state subsiding housing, or perhaps supporting parents through programmes such as "Parents as First Teachers".

Employers

Employers' groups throughout the world have generally argued against the statutory provision of parental leave, both on a paid and unpaid basis (Department of Labour, 1986; Spalter-Roth & Hartmann, 1991), primarily on the basis of potential cost.[52] It has been also been argued in New Zealand, and overseas, that if parental leave is required it would emerge as a normal part of the negotiating process between employers and employees (Department of Labour, 1986; Waldfogel, 1995). However, there appear to be many reasons for parental leave not being on the negotiating agenda, including the reluctance of male-dominated unions to support such issues (Nicholl, 1995).

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[52] The New Zealand Employers' Federation, however, supports voluntary agreements worked out between companies and unions, or companies and individuals, or leave potentially funded by the employees themselves through savings, loans, or through their own insurance schemes (Smith, 1994). Examples of employment contracts with payments for parental leave, including paternity leave, can be found in New Zealand (Harbridge, 1994; Kennedy, 1994). However, payment for maternity leave is found mostly in the public sector. In addition, the payment is usually linked to a requirement to return to full-time work, and to remain with the employer for a minimum period, usually 6 months. Therefore, the payment could be regarded more as a "bonus" for returning to work, rather than strictly as a payment for leave.

Statutory unpaid leave may add a cost to an employer of finding a suitable temporary replacement, especially if the replacement is less skilled in the particular job. Alternatively, however, if the parent leaves permanently the cost may in some instances be even higher.[53] If the parental leave is paid leave, funded by the government through a tax on businesses, the cost is spread across all firms and may be an additional cost to them all. Organisations will therefore theoretically adjust by reducing other parts of total wage costs, cut back production, and/or employ fewer of those people whose price has increased. If the employer has to pay all, or part, of the leave the cost to the individual firm would be significantly higher. But leave, paid or unpaid, only raises the cost of labour to a particular employer if an employee takes the leave. Therefore, businesses can avoid the risk of having to provide leave by discriminating against groups of potential employees who are most likely to request leave. Unlike individual contracts containing leave provisions, with statutory leave, firms are less able to predict beforehand precisely who will, or will not, take leave. They can, however, rely on statistical predictions and cut back wages or the number of jobs of groups most likely to take leave or shift them into positions where periods of leave are less costly.

Whether a firm can discriminate depends on how easy it is to identify the high risk group, how many substitutes are available, the overall dynamics of the labour market, and laws against discrimination.[54] For example, hospital managers may see young female nurses as belonging to a group at risk for requesting parental leave, but the costs of substituting male nurses or older female nurses may be very high. A firm that hires in the area of male-dominated trades may see parental leave as increasing the potential costs of hiring a young female apprentice, but not the costs of hiring a young male apprentice.[55]

Trzcinski (1989) notes that "the more general are the provisions of the mandated leave, the broader the class of workers eligible and at risk of requesting leave" (p. 14). For example, a shift from providing maternity to providing paternity leave and gender-neutral parental leave expands the group potentially able to request such leave. Extending this further to include family leave for a wider range of activities, covers more leave than parental leave and further expands the groups of employees likely to request leave. For example, as discussed in the section on equality and difference, treating pregnancy and childbirth as medical disabilities has the potential to associate these events with disabilities which are more likely to occur in men, such as heart attacks or injuries from contact sports such as rugby. Trzcinski (1989) suggests that "as the pool of employees at risk of requesting leave expands", the costs to the employer of relying on "statistical discrimination" to eliminate potential leave-takers increase (p. 14).

However, parental leave offers some major potential benefits to employers. Marshall (1994) suggests that the average female employee who has worked in the New Zealand financial sector for 10 years on entering parental leave has had approximately $37,000 of training invested in her. The New Zealand Treasury estimates that it costs an average of $18,000 to find, interview, and select a new analyst (Lampe,

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[53] The ideas in this paragraph, and the following 2 paragraphs, draw extensively on the work of Trzcinski (1989). In this work she provides a detailed discussion of the theoretical issues surrounding the costs and benefits of parental leave, both on the supply and demand side of the labour market.

[54] While the ability to discriminate depends in part on laws (and social attitudes) against discrimination, the effort to enforce them, and the penalties for breaking them, are also important. For example, Marchione and Helsing (1984) note that maternity protection laws "must be pursued together with an enforcement of laws protecting the employment rights of women" (p. 27). However, an emphasis on formal guarantees of job security and accrued benefits overlooks the fact that promotion is often reliant on informal institutional politics (Heitlinger, 1987). For a detailed discussion about the impact of protective legislation on women's lives *see* Heitlinger (1987, 1993).

[55] This is of course assuming that men have long-term commitments to employers. They may also leave but for reasons other than looking after children.

1993). For most employees who have undertaken some firm-specific training there is an advantage to employers in ensuring they return to the workplace. In the United States, there are examples of employers paying for parental leave to ensure the worker returns. There are also situations in New Zealand where a payment is made if a person returns from parental leave and has worked a required minimum period back, usually 6 months. Eligibility clauses for parental leave can also reduce staff turnover as potential parents need a stable work record before having a child. It has also been argued that having parental leave, particularly if it is paid, improves worker motivation, loyalty, and efficiency, and promotes a positive public image of the company (12 Weeks Paid Parental Leave Campaign, 1994). However, empirical data supporting this appear to be limited. In addition, the European Commission (1994) argues that taking leave to enhance family responsibilities may enhance the performance of many employees when they return to work, not only because they may feel more committed and less stressed, but because caring for children develops generally applicable skills and qualities. Finally, having leave provisions is likely to expand the pool of potential employees a firm can draw on.

The costs and benefits of providing parental leave to employers are also dependent on a number of variables. As already discussed, who pays for the benefit is of major importance. Time is also an important factor. A relatively short period of leave, 1 month for example, may involve little disruption to a workplace, with the firm often already well experienced in covering such periods in terms of holidays or other leave, whereas a year of leave is likely to involve more disruption and cost. The size of the organisation is also important, with small employers potentially facing more difficulty in covering absences from work. Occupational specialisation is also seen as an important variable in the cost and feasibility of providing leave, and this issue, through the "key position" exemption, is taken into account in New Zealand's parental-leave legislation. But, at times, "key" people are in fact relatively easy to replace. For example, it is a well-established practice to bring in locums to cover leave taken by doctors or dentists. The state of the labour market also will be a factor in how parental leave is viewed. For instance, in a time of skill shortages offering parental leave may be seen as a way of keeping skilled staff, whereas in a time of excess labour supply there may be less incentive for employers to offer leave. And finally, Waldfogel (1995) found that the costs to employers were lowered when they had certainty as to whether an employee would return after parental leave. Specifically referring to maternity leave, Waldfogel (1995) suggests that "only the employee knows whether she intends to return from a maternity leave . . . [and] even if the employee does not intend to return, there might be incentives for her to mislead the employer in order to gain benefits during the leave and to retain her option to come back" (p. 45). But Waldfogel suggests employers can reduce this information problem in 2 ways, by paid incentives to return, and by keeping in touch with women during their leave, offering the chance to return part time and demonstrating that they want to have the women back. However, the paid incentive to return is disputed elsewhere. The 1986 review of payments for parental leave (Department of Labour, 1986) suggests such incentives are likely to be ineffective.

The information issue, however, is also noted by other researchers. The European Commission (1994) argues that, in general, there is little evidence from Europe to suggest that parental leave, or any other *predictable* type of leave such as maternity and paternity leave, causes major problems or costs to employers. This is partly because parental leave affects only a small part of the work force at any one time. For example, in the New Zealand context, Hyman (12 Weeks Paid Parental Leave Campaign, 1994) suggests that under current legislation only 1.8 percent of women would be eligible for leave at any one time. However, unpredictable and ongoing leave such as looking after sick children can cause problems (European Commission, 1994).

Parental leave, particularly unpaid leave, may be seen as a cost-effective alternative to other "family friendly" policies for individual employers. For example, it may be a cheaper option for a business to have

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breastfeeding employees at home for a period, rather than provide an on-site creche or other facilities, as discussed, to allow the combination of paid work and breastfeeding.

Employees

Unpaid parental leave may have only a minimal effect on other employees. Four possible effects, some potentially positive and some negative, could be:

- Firms encouraging multi-skilling or job rotations to ensure that gaps left by those taking parental leave are easily filled from within the business.
- The creation of temporary, insecure jobs to serve as fill-in positions while a person is on leave.
- The workload being spread across other workers to fill the gap, increasing the hours or pace of work for remaining workers.
- Temporary promotion and additional training for the person filling the vacant job.

As already partly discussed, the provision of paid parental leave, depending on how the leave is funded, can also have a number of effects on other employees in companies. If the leave is funded as a payroll tax or similar, it has the benefit of spreading the cost across all workplaces and reduces the chances of employers discriminating against potential parents, particularly women. But this also reduces other employees' incomes, which might be resented by those employees with no children. However Hyman, working on the basis of 12 weeks' paid leave in New Zealand with income set at 100 percent of earnings (with a cap), suggests the costs to other workers per year is low, at around 0.3 percent of payroll, and, on average, about $110 per worker (12 Weeks Paid Parental Leave Campaign, 1994).

Society

Trzcinski and Finn-Stevenson (1991), like many other writers in the field, point to the complexities involved in formulating parental-leave policies and claim that there is a need to think about a number of questions in debates about parental leave. They ask whether the full consequences of not having leave on children, families, and society as a whole have been considered. They also query the timeframe being used, asking whether it is 1 month, 1 year, or over a number of generations?

The European Commission (1994) suggests there are a number of benefits from having parental leave available. It is suggested that although some of these benefits may be mainly captured by individual families, the effects are also spread through society. According to the Commission (1994), the societal benefits of parental leave are:

1. **Promoting equal opportunities between women and men in the labour market,** through:
    a) enabling women to retain their position in the labour market during child-bearing;
    b) encouraging increased participation by men in the care and upbringing of children and more equal sharing of family responsibilities between men and women.

2. **Promoting the health and well-being of children, pregnant women, mothers and fathers**, through:

a) protecting the health of pregnant women, women immediately after childbirth, and unborn and very young infants;
b) giving sick children the right to have their parents present and, more generally, giving children the right to more of their parents' time;
c) giving parents the opportunity to spend more time with their children;
d) enhancing choice in the organisation of employment and family life;
e) reducing conflict between work and family life and reducing the 'double burden' on women by promoting more equal sharing of family responsibilities;
f) recognising the social importance of motherhood and fatherhood.

3. **Promoting the well-being of families**, through:
   a) contributing to better family functioning and relationships.

4. **Improving economic performance**, through:
   a) making better use of human resources as a result of retaining women workers in the labour force and enabling parents to work under less stress.

5. **Reducing unemployment**, through:
   a) using unemployed workers to make up for all or part of the working time resulting from parents taking leave. (pp. 10-11)

In addition, reducing the conflict between work and family may have a number of beneficial effects on society. These include.

- Increasing national fertility rates. Sweden is often noted for the way in which it has managed to combine high rates of female participation in paid work with above-average, developed-country fertility rates (Sundström, 1993). This represents a potential benefit if there is an aging population, as in Sweden which currently has the highest proportion of population over 65 years of age of all OECD countries (Blank, 1994). And in New Zealand, there is some evidence that mothers in 2-parent families who work full time are more likely to have smaller families than mothers who work part time or are not in paid work (Callister, 1994).
- Increasing the number of taxpayers in the medium term, and lessening those dependent on state benefits in society, by encouraging additional workers to enter and remain in paid work.
- Enhancing the full participation of women in society, and protecting employees' rights thereby avoiding costly litigation in the courts.

In the case of New Zealand, however, the arguments that statutory parental leave reduces unemployment and increases national fertility rates are not very pertinent.

Establishing the costs and benefits of paid parental leave to society is even more complex. In Europe, paid parental leave is usually funded through public funds.[56] The European Commission (1994) notes that the cost of paid parental leave in terms of government spending appears substantial in terms of dollar amounts. But the Commission suggests it is difficult to get at other direct and indirect costs. In addition, while the spending is large relative to spending on other groups, such as the elderly or the unemployed, it is relatively small.

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[56] According to the European Commission (1994) "'Public funds' refers to money originating either from general taxation or from contributions that all employers are required to pay into a fund to finance benefit payments" (p. 30).

As to the benefits of paid parental leave, the European Commission notes that no detailed and comprehensive cost-benefit studies have been undertaken and there is little quantified work detailing to what extent leave arrangements contribute to specific objectives. For example, it is not known whether parental leave leads to lower unemployment.

However, in countries with extensive publicly funded childcare services and commitments to extend these to meet parental demand, the direct cost of paying parents on leave may result in savings due to reduced demand for out-of-home childcare services (European Commission, 1994, p. 34).[57] [58] Therefore parental leave can, at times, be seen as a direct cost-saving measure for governments. This was a concern expressed by both the then New Zealand Federation of Labour and the Combined State Unions in their submissions to the 1986 Working Party on Payment for Parental Leave. For example, the FOL noted (Department of Labour, 1986: Annex A):

> We cannot but suspect that the provision of parental leave may be used as an excuse to ease up on providing quality childcare centres and the FOL is adamant that such a 'trade-off' should not occur. (p. 3)

The Working Party on Payment for Parental Leave covered some of the potential costs and benefits of paid parental leave to society in its report (Department of Labour, 1986). It suggested that, in determining the costs and benefits of paid leave to society, 3 main aspects of state responsibility can be identified (Department of Labour, 1986):

> - Equity: that families earning two incomes are often those most in need of the second income to survive; they can least afford to take unpaid leave and the leave provision would therefore be of little value to them without payment.
>
> - Social Benefits: that social benefits accrue from close contact between children and parents in the early years of life, leading to a more stable society. Economically, this could show benefits in reduced expenditure, for example, on prisons or social workers.
>
> - Agency: that young children are unable to meet their own needs (physical, emotional and psychological) and therefore need parents or guardians to assume the role of 'agents' in order to fulfil these needs. Because children cannot require parents to act for them in a socially acceptable way, it may be necessary for the State to provide an incentive to parents to act in the best interests of their children. (p. 7)

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[57] According to the European Commission the savings come in 2 ways, directly with the child the leave is being taken for, and indirectly in that many parents take older children out of childcare while on leave. This in part, explains why in Sweden, although there is a well-funded system of childcare with guaranteed places for all children, in 1993 over 40 percent of children aged 1 to 6 years were not attending publicly funded childcare services (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1995, p. 71).

[58] There will also be indirect costs and benefits of both forms of care which depend on their relative quality and cost.

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The working party argued that the concern for equity could justify a payment for parental leave. However, it argued that such a payment should be directed only to low-income families who would otherwise be unable to take advantage of the leave provisions. But it also argued that legislating for a separate targeted payment for parental leave would be costly. In addition, it suggested that such a payment might duplicate existing social welfare provisions, and would, therefore, probably not assist low-income families any more effectively. However, as already discussed, while sole mothers could potentially utilise the domestic purposes benefit as a form of paid parental leave, the issue is more problematic for 2-parent families. In addition, it is likely parents would view a specialist parental-leave payment in a different way from other income-support benefits, with some parents perhaps not wanting to be on a "benefit".

The working party also argued that payment for paternity leave has a particular value in welfare terms (Department of Labour, 1986).

> The two week period of paternity leave is particularly valuable in ensuring a good relationship between parents and child, and in providing physical and emotional support for the mother over the period of recovery from the birth. If the father is unable to take leave to provide this support, the State may have to provide it by means of the Department of Social Welfare's home help or Karitane services.[59] If the father's income is the sole source of income for the family the absence of a payment may prevent low or middle income earners taking leave because the family could not manage for two weeks with no income.[60] (p. 8)

The working party suggested it was difficult to justify any legislated payment for leave on the basis of the social benefits argument. There was thought to be a lack of information on the extent to which leave might benefit wider society, rather than just directly benefiting the parents and the particular children (Department of Labour, 1986).

Measuring such benefits and then assigning them to individual *versus* societal gain is clearly difficult. In New Zealand, this is particularly difficult as there is a lack of longitudinal research. However, an absence of information does not mean that there are not potential societal benefits.

The working party considered the "agency" argument also difficult to justify as a reason for a payment. It argued that some people may wish to arrange for the care of their infants in some other way, and that a statutory payment may tend to reduce that choice. Secondly, the working party argued that since social welfare and tax-based payments already provide financial support to parents, a further payment seemed unnecessary, particularly on account of the larger costs (Department of Labour, 1986). However, no clear case was put forward as to why a statutory parental-leave benefit would tend to preclude other childcare choices. If anything, the current subsidy in New Zealand for formalised out-of-home care of children from birth to 2 years of age indicates some, if small, governmental support for non-parental care of young children.

Government

As employers, governments face similar issues to other employers. In many countries, including New Zealand, the government sets a lead in providing employee benefits, including parental-leave benefits. For example, public sector contracts in New Zealand generally have better eligibility and duration clauses, and are more likely to have a payment for leave than those in the private sector (Harbridge, 1994). However, governments are increasingly under pressure to cut their spending and improve efficiencies within the public sector, so these additional benefits are under pressure.

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[59] There is no indication that such help is, in fact, given, except perhaps in the case of multiple births.

[60] However, Social Welfare argue that "generally, when a family is expecting a baby there is sufficient time to plan for the event and the reduction in income that will occur when one or both parents cease work for a period" (Social Policy Agency, Department of Social Welfare, personal communication, 1 September 1995).

The government is also responsible for weighing up policies to ensure a healthy economy and society. Any additional payment to a particular group in society, such as parents on leave, has to be assessed on its costs and benefits as well as against competing claims, such as those from the elderly, and also against the ability of the country to fund such expenditure. In weighing up decisions, some complex links need to be established. For example, as outlined in the section on breastfeeding, the effects of mothers not breastfeeding can add to national health costs. However, in examining potential options which might facilitate breastfeeding, it could be asked whether it is it better for the government to provide paid parental leave in the hope that it will be mainly taken up by mothers to assist in breastfeeding, and/or whether it is perhaps better to legislate for breastfeeding breaks in the workplace and, at the same time, require all businesses to provide on-site childcare, thereby transferring the costs to them?

But there is also the issue of what particular governments can afford, given the state of their particular economy. Questions concerning the ability of governments to fund parental leave, and other forms of social spending, are continually raised, particularly in Sweden and other Nordic countries. "The Nordic Countries Survey" (1994) notes the beginning of a recession in 1990 in Sweden. A rise in unemployment was matched by an increase in spending on benefits and a fall in tax revenues, pushing the public sector, which was in surplus in the late 1980s, into a major deficit. The article argues that Sweden will need large cuts in government spending, suggesting that people are no longer willing to pay even higher taxes to fund a deficit. At the same time, however, it is worth noting that other countries which have neither paid parental leave nor generous welfare provisions can similarly have major financial problems, the United States for example.

Linked to these government spending cuts is the increasing globalisation of national economies, with relatively free flow of goods, services, capital, and, to a lesser degree, labour. In the United States for example, the current government deficit crisis is caused partly by the trade deficit which is blamed, in turn, on a massive inflow of "cheap" goods from developing countries. In this context, questions are also raised as to what extent individual countries can set taxes and support welfare spending significantly outside the limits of international "norms" (Callister, 1991). For example, Yeatman (1992) argues that "global policies concerning economic restructuring and structural adjustment have completely residualised national policies committed to making labour markets less discriminatory in relation to women" (p. 210).

Summary

- Concepts of "equality" and "difference" in relation to women and men and patterns of work, both paid and unpaid, vary between countries, and have changed over time. While these concepts are potentially problematic in dealing with differences within groups of women and within groups of men and therefore, at times, between various women and men, they are nevertheless an integral part of the debates around the provision and design of parental-leave policies.

- Parental-leave polices at a national level can have a significant impact on the patterns of paid and unpaid work of women, especially in the first weeks or months following the birth of a child. However, while these polices have the potential to impact on men's patterns of work, the impact in most countries has been insignificant. But attitudes of families, employers, and society in general also have a major effect on childcare and paid-work roles for women and men.

- There appear to be significant benefits to society, children, parents, and, at times, employers if children are breastfed. But there are also potential costs for women if breastfeeding creates "difference" from men in terms of labour-market participation and occupational segregation and reinforces the role of mothers as primary caregivers of children.

- Historically, in many countries including New Zealand the design of parental-leave policies has been based around issues of pregnancy and childbirth, but has not explicitly taken into account the issue of breastfeeding or men's involvement in childcare.

- Although international recommendations stress the need for governments to provide legislation to protect the breastfeeding rights of women in paid employment, there are clearly major tensions in developing policies and practices which enable, protect, and support both breastfeeding and women's short- and long-term economic outcomes relative to men. It would appear, however, that although breastfeeding is strongly promoted in New Zealand there is little protection afforded it either through the provision of mandated breastfeeding breaks in the workplace, or at the economic level through the provision of paid parental leave for instance.

- This protection is of particular relevance to low-income women because, as indicated by the international literature, this group is often under economic pressure to return to paid employment soon after childbirth. While in the United States context there has been, to a limited extent, a focus on establishing "baby-friendly" or "breastfeeding friendly" workplaces, these are potentially problematic, particularly if left to employer discretion. It would appear that those women with least negotiating power in the workplace, in general those with low pay and low status, are least likely to have access to such programmes. These programmes may also deflect attention from the need for parental-leave provisions which protect the economic welfare of such mothers and their children while enabling them to meet current recommendations advising exclusive, on-demand breastfeeding for 4 to 6 months.

- In addition, the international literature indicates a need for adequate provision of good-quality, affordable childcare within large employment centres, another factor which might not only facilitate breastfeeding among some mothers in paid employment but also support the attachment of women with young children to the labour force. As a growing number of infants under the age of 12 months are being cared for within childcare centres, and, increasingly, childcare centres are targeting their services at infants under 6 months, it is important that these environments develop policies which facilitate and support breastfeeding for women who choose to feed their infants this way. The intersection between the increase in infants under 1 year of age in non-parental childcare and breastfeeding practices and policies needs to be addressed as a specific issue in the New Zealand literature on early childhood education and care.

- Such policies appear to be important in view of the fact that child health is identified as one of the 4 "health gain priority areas" determined by the New Zealand government for 1994-95, and also for 1995-96. In addition, children from families with lower socioeconomic status or those "at risk", and those Maori or Pacific Islands children who correlate with these categories, are targeted for special attention.

- While in most societies there has been considerable focus on encouraging women to seek equality with men in paid work, there has been little focus on encouraging equality in unpaid work, in particular caring for children in the early months of their life. Some EC/EU and Nordic countries, notably Sweden, provide examples of how this policy balance can be altered. However, even in these countries relatively few men take extensive periods of parental leave, especially in the first 6 months of a child's life, although in these particular countries it has been suggested that breastfeeding is one complicating factor.

- In the Nordic countries, the factors influencing fathers in their decisions to take parental leave, and for what length of time are very complex. However, in general, men who choose to take parental leave are usually well educated and have well-educated partners, greater negotiating power in the workplace, and also more "egalitarian" relations in the home. In addition, they appear to be more adaptable to the changes involved in the decline of the gender division of labour. In contrast, those New Zealand fathers most likely to be at home are often there not through choice but through unemployment.

- The provision of statutory parental leave appears to bring significant benefits, particularly to women in terms of labour-market outcomes. But there are also costs involved in the provision and uptake of unpaid leave.

- Issues around the provision of paid parental leave, and its costs and benefits to parents, employers, children, and society, are extremely complex and relatively unexplored in New Zealand. They include gender equity issues in relation to both paid and unpaid work, policies or legislation protecting the health of women in paid employment and their children, and determining the appropriate responsibilities of the State, employers, and individual parents in relation to the care of children. However, it appears that paid leave may have particular benefits for low-income families, many of whom are Maori or from Pacific Islands groups.

- The design of statutory parental-leave schemes is very important, with the potential, however, to exclude significant numbers of parents from making use of their provisions. In particular, parents in "secondary labour" markets have the potential to be excluded from coverage.

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CHAPTER 4

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES AND PARENTS IN PAID WORK

Valerie N. Podmore

Introduction

This chapter discusses international research and policy literature which links childcare provision to the participation in paid work of parents with young children. Reference is made to documents concerned with the demand for, and the use of, early childhood education services to maximise work time, and to policies which potentially reconcile work and family responsibilities. Related issues addressed in the literature and examined in this review include the availability of high-quality early childhood education services, and the use of multiple childcare arrangements. Finally, there is brief reference to research on informal care arrangements within families.

Early Childhood Education

In this section of the literature review, studies concerned with early childhood education and parents in paid work are organised according to their countries of origin. The intention is to place the research within its appropriate social, cultural, and policy contexts.

United States

Policy Studies

Many researchers in the United States have reported a need for more comprehensive policies which recognise the diversity of families and meet the needs, including the childcare requirements, of parents in paid work who have young children (e.g., Kamerman & Kahn, 1991; Matthews & Rodin, 1989; Scarr, Phillips, & McCartney, 1989; Schroeder, 1989; Silverstein, 1991; Strober, 199[illegible] Other writers and researchers have investigated the extent to which industries and employers provide for the childcare needs of employees who are parents (e.g., Louv, 1992; Saltford & Heck, 1989).

Scarr, Phillips, and McCartney (1989) examined research findings on working parents and childcare. They report that the United States policies on childcare and parental leave were "an anomaly among industrialized nations" (p. 1405), and that high-quality childcare was one of the most pressing issues for parents in paid work. From the research reviewed they conclude that high-quality care is characterised by high ratios of staff to children, small group size, staff training in child development, and stability of children's childcare experiences, factors leading to sensitive staff-child interactions which in turn are associated with positive social and cognitive development. The researchers conclude that:

> For policymakers at federal and state levels, the most pressing issues are how to fund a system of quality child care, regulate those aspects of quality that can be

> legislated and enforced, and coordinate efforts with the private sector and at all levels of government. (p. 1407)

Kamerman and Kahn (1991) point out that, in the United States, "champions of liberal child policy and gender equity" have responded to recent labour-market trends (p. 9). These "champions" have advocated policies which include affordable, good-quality childcare, parental leave, and flexible workplace policies allowing time to care for sick children.

Ferber, O'Farrell, and Allen (1991) report a detailed analysis of key issues in the United States debate on work and family. They identify the quality of childcare as an important mediating factor in the relationship between parents' participation in paid work and their children's wellbeing. Drawing on Howes's work, they define the key components of quality as stability of caregivers, staff-child ratios, group size, aspects of physical facilities, staff training, and funding to provide adequate staffing. Howes (1986, 1988, 1990, 1991) has researched the dimensions of childcare quality extensively in the United States context. According to Ferber *et al.* the impact of group care on infants aged under 1 year may require further investigation.

Strober (1994), an economist who has analysed the market in the United States for formal childcare, concludes that:

> There are two arguments for increased government subsidization of child care: increased efficiency and increased quality. The increased efficiency argument is that there is currently underinvestment in child care, that parents spend too little on quality child care and that the negative effects of this underinvestment accrue not only to children and parents, but also to society as a whole. This argument suggests that child care has external benefits and that the citizenry as a whole has an interest (or should have an interest) in ensuring that young children whose parent(s) work receive good quality child care. (p. 14)

Strober's comments about "external" benefits are relevant to funding policies and the provision of quality childcare. Strober (1995) has also examined the labour market and work environment for workers in childcare centres by interviewing centre staff in 4 types of large childcare centres in California. Strober recommends that cost-effectiveness analyses should be funded to assess childcare policies such as economic incentives and subsidies.

A recent large-scale study of cost, quality, and child outcomes has investigated the situation in childcare centres in the United States (Helburn, 1995). The sample was drawn from 4 states: California, Colorado, Connecticut, and North Carolina, and 100 centres participated from each state. Both for-profit and non-profit centres were represented (Cryer, Presner-Feinberg, Culkin, Philipsen, & Rustici, cited in Helburn, 1995). The study reaffirms that high-quality care is important for children's cognitive and socioemotional development. However, Helburn reports that only 1 in 7 childcare centres there provides care of sufficient quality to foster healthy development and learning, and that the quality of care for infants and toddlers is a cause for concern. Weak licensing requirements and low staff wages were found at lower-quality childcare centres.

Multiple Care Arrangements

Researchers in the United States have also described complex, multiple care arrangements which parents in paid employment make for their children. Fox Folk and Yi (1994) examined data from the 1987 National Survey of Families and Households on 469 employed women who had at least 1 child aged under 5 years. The researchers reported that parents used a range of multiple care combinations. Their defined categories of care were: care by the child's father, care by other relatives, care by an older sibling, participation in group care (at a childcare centre, nursery school, preschool, or other organised lesson or camp), and use of family daycare. The use of family daycare or group (centre-based) care was found less frequently among 2-child families than among 1-child families. The authors attributed this trend in care arrangements to cost factors and lack of economies of scale in the fees charged for families with more than 1 child. Among households with married mothers, there was a slightly greater tendency to use multiple care arrangements if there were 2 preschool children in the family (63.2 percent), than there was if there was 1 preschool child (52.1 percent), but this finding was not statistically significant. Regression analyses of the data showed that women most likely to use multiple arrangements had a varying work schedule, worked more than 40 hours per week, and had a higher level of education. Families where the father was the main care provider were also much more likely to use multiple informal and formal arrangements. Mothers who worked part time for less than 20 hours per week were less likely to use multiple arrangements. Closer scrutiny of their data shows that the "multiple arrangements" were often informal ones, and seldom involved the use of several of the early childhood education and care services concurrently. Only 6 married-mother, 1-child households used a family daycare and group-care combination, and only 2 single-mother, 1-child households used this combination. Where group care was combined with informal care (by the father, a relative, or a sibling), the amount of time spent in group care averaged 30 hours per week for children with married mothers, and 40 hours per week for children with single mothers. Fox Folk and Yi (1994) conclude that:

> These findings underscore the complexity of arranging child care for preschool children with employed parents and the importance of multiple care as a very common strategy used by parents to provide care. Policies to assist families with child care should have provisions for multiple providers and include programs to increase the supply of child care during evening and weekend hours. (p. 679)

They also suggest that future research should investigate whether children benefit from multiple care arrangements or whether continuity of care through single arrangements is more beneficial, and whether the benefits of multiple and single arrangements differ according to children's ages.

Employers and Childcare Support

The provision of childcare resources and information by corporations has been addressed by a number of writers, researchers, and consortia in the United States (e.g., Catalyst, 1987; Fernandez, 1986; Galinsky & Friedman, 1993; Louv, 1992; Marquart, 1991; Saltford & Heck, 1989; Shelton, 1992). Fernandez (1986) studied 5 large, "technically oriented" companies by sending questionnaires to their 7000 employees. Around 5000 employees returned the questionnaire, giving a response rate of 70 percent. In total, 67 percent of the employees responded that childcare problems impact negatively on employees' productivity. Fernandez found that, among employees with children aged 18 years and under, 77 percent of women and 73 percent of men had dealt with family issues during working hours, and 48 percent of women and 25 percent of men had spent unproductive time at work because of childcare matters. Women took responsibility for family matters more often than men, and 39 percent of the women and 13 percent of the men stressed that handling family/work roles was a substantial problem. High percentages of employees expected that corporations should undertake to: provide financial assistance to employees with childcare difficulties; promote flexible work options; supply resources and information on childcare facilities; and provide training to support employees who encounter problems with childcare, work/family roles, or children's developments. When interpreting these findings within their appropriate political context, it is important to note Fernandez's comment that in the 1980s, despite the United States government's renewed interest in quality care for children of working parents, there was no support from President Ronald Reagan for "substantial commitment of federal funds for the provision of quality child care services, and cuts in block grants to states has negatively affected state efforts to address the issue" (Fernandez, 1986, p. 21). Clearly, in that political climate, the onus of childcare provision for working parents rested more with the employers than with the government.

Research reports from the Families and Work Institute in New York state that children, parents, workplaces, and society all benefit from high-quality childcare. Specific benefits for employers have been demonstrated. For example, Galinsky and Friedman (1993) report that high-quality, flexible childcare arrangements are linked to lower absenteeism rates and less stress among parents who are employed.

Saltford and Heck (1989) comment that, although corporate benefits and provisions including childcare have been regarded as necessary extensions to workers' compensation, they have not generally been justified through a direct causal link to productivity. Saltford and Heck suggest that, in view of the complexities inherent in measuring productivity and then linking it to other factors, it is perhaps inevitable that research investigating the relationship between childcare provision and workplace productivity is seldom undertaken. The quality of the childcare service provided is a further confounding variable not specifically addressed in their discussion. Saltford and Heck summarise research carried out in the 1970s and 1980s on benefits and policies offered by employers in the private sector. They describe 3 approaches to research on the benefits of employer-provided childcare services:

- surveys of employers, about their experiences of on-site childcare provision;
- surveys of employees about their work, childcare needs, and related experiences and problems (for example, the research by Fernandez, 1986); and
- studies of employees who are users or non-users of the childcare provided within a specific workplace or corporation.

Saltford and Heck report that some studies have shown that difficulty in securing adequate childcare has been a factor in absenteeism and unproductive time spent at work. They also point out that in the United States, the costs incurred by corporations providing on-site childcare centres can be prohibitive, whereas participation in a group (or a "consortium"of private, local body, and/or public sector employers) can be a more financially feasible way to establish childcare facilities for employees. Saltford and Heck argue that, although there is research supporting the effects of childcare provision on workplaces, further development of appropriate measures of productivity, and more studies using multivariate techniques, are needed.

In another review of the literature on the benefits of corporations' supplying childcare facilities, Marquart (1991) notes that on-site childcare centres have tended to be established in specific situations. In the United States a high proportion of work-based childcare centres are sited at health-care facilities, which have these characteristics: a specialised labour force, a limited supply of trained staff, and irregular shift work.

A paper by Catalyst (1987) points out that the most visible option for employers is to supply on-site or near-site childcare centres. However, Catalyst also describes less visible options for corporate funding of childcare arrangements, including the provision of support for family daycare homes or systems, and the provision of information about childcare services. According to the Catalyst report, 40 percent of all working parents with young children use family daycare homes, and these arrangements have been supported financially in New York by the American Express company and other corporations.

Shelton (1992) also explains that employers may provide assistance with childcare in a variety of ways. These include: providing childcare information and referral services, subsidising employees' childcare arrangements, or offering on-site childcare services. She identifies several advantages associated with the sponsoring of services by employers, for example, such provisions are gender-neutral and enable men or women to continue their careers, and they reduce workloads in households by reducing childcare time and housework time. However, Shelton also concludes that it is still unusual in the United States for employers to sponsor childcare, with the exception of some larger work sites, and that employees at small worksites not only tend to miss out on childcare support from their employers, but are also paid less than their counterparts at larger worksites.

Some of these options have been examined further by Louv (1992). He summarises the findings on businesses in the United States and reports that, although the percentage of employers offering childcare assistance had increased gradually over time, on the whole corporations were doing little to help with childcare. He notes a tension between the state's health and safety regulations for quality provision and the amount employers said they were able to spend on setting up childcare facilities. Louv also reports that parents resisted on-site creches because they were concerned that the corporation would control both their own and their children's lives.

Nordic Countries

Policy Studies

Several researchers from the United States have reported positively on the policies which have been implemented in Scandinavia to ensure that high-quality childcare is available for children whose parents are in paid work (e.g., Hechinger & Hechinger, 1990; Kamerman & Kahn, 1994). In addition, recent research and writing from within the Nordic countries shows that an inclusive approach to defining quality childcare has developed there. For example, Langsted (1994) and Jensen (1994) describe how Denmark is moving towards definitions of quality early childhood services which include children's perspectives, and Langsted argues for policies and structures which recognise young children as stakeholders.

Hechinger and Hechinger (1990) report that in comparison with the United States, childcare centres in the Scandinavian countries are open long hours and are well staffed. They also observed that the child policies in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark include generous provision for parents who are in paid work to care for their own children when they are ill, and that a home visitor scheme was available for working parents with sick children.

Kamerman and Kahn (1994), who constructed detailed profiles of several countries' policies and provisions, report that Denmark had the highest coverage of childcare provision (including childcare centres and family daycare) for children aged under 3 years in Western Europe. They describe how Finland and Sweden have passed pioneering legislation on parental leave and other options which support parents caring for infants at home, while also legislating the right to guaranteed places in childcare centres. The development of infant and toddler care in the Nordic countries has been linked to parental-leave provisions. Kamerman and Kahn note that at the time they were writing in 1994, the duration of paid parental leave offered was 1 year in Finland, 15 months in Sweden, and 6 to 12 months in Denmark. This meant that "toddler care" was provided rather than "infant care", because only small numbers of children aged under 1 year were found in childcare centres.

Municipal homemaking, another service available in the Nordic countries, provides domiciliary caregiving when children are sick. The municipal homemaking system was first formalised in Finland by an Act of Parliament in 1950, with the original intention of helping rural, poor families where there were several children (Simonen, 1990). Municipal homemakers are qualified carers who have completed a 2½-year practical and theoretical training course. They may care for children in their homes when the children are too sick to attend daycare, and they also provide services for elderly and handicapped people. According to Simonen, municipal homemaking has become a particularly stable arrangement in Finland, where homemakers providing this service are full-time salaried government employees.

Several of these policies, as outlined by Hechinger and Hechinger (1990) and Simonen (1990), are likely to reduce both cross-infection in early childhood centres and parents' stress. They offer an alternative model to that of employer-provided backup creches or the use of company nurses when children are sick. Publications from Denmark also emphasise the central importance of the young children themselves as stakeholders.

Sweden

Policies, Contexts, and Outcomes for Children

In Stockholm and Göteborg, Andersson (1989, 1992) and his team of researchers carried out long-term follow-up studies of children who started attending daycare centres at an early age. They tracked a sample of 128 children from the first year of life up to age 13 years. For the first 3 years of life the data collection was retrospective. About a third of the children attended daycare outside the home during the first year of life, but none of the children was aged under 6 months when first placed in a daycare centre. Andersson (1992) reports that, compared with children who commenced daycare at an older age and with children who were cared for in their own homes, children who started centre-based or family daycare before the age of 1 year tended to perform better in school and to be rated more highly by their teachers on their social and emotional behaviour at age 8 years and again at age 13 years.

Andersson (1992) points out that in Sweden there were very high standards of daycare, and that paid parental leave was available during the child's first 6 months of life. Andersson, Kihlblom, and Sandqvist (1993) subsequently explain further that:

> At the time the children were born, one parent could stay at home for 6-7 months with 90% of their salary paid by the social insurance system (this period is now extended to 12 months). With almost no exceptions, Swedish mothers took advantage of this opportunity and all children were therefore over 6 months of age when first placed in day-care. Although mothers often shortened their daily work hours, travelling time to and from the job has to be added, which easily amounts to one or more hours per day. In this study 'day-care' therefore refers to full time or almost full-time c[illegible] of at least 5-6 hours per day, and usually more. Day care centres do not accept children for only half the day. Instead children only needing half time day-care were placed in family day-care. (p. 15)

Access and provision have been important aspects of childcare in Sweden. Sundström (1991) reports that, from the late 1960s, the Social Democratic party in particular has given high priority to expanding public childcare. It has also been documented that the provision of quality childcare services and facilities has been part of Sweden's policy of equality of opportunity and commitment to supporting workers with family responsibilities (e.g., International Labour Office, 1993).

In 1985, the Swedish Parliament voted in support of a proposal that by 1991, all children aged from 1½ to 6 years of age should have the right to a place in public childcare while their parents worked or studied (Gunnarsson, 1993). The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (1994) reports that there was considerable progress towards achieving this goal, but a sharp increase in the birth rate occurred in Sweden during the late 1980s. The Child Care Act (part of the Social Services Act) subsequently stipulated that "from 1 January 1994, all parents who ask for child care are by law guaranteed a place in pre-school day-care-centres for a child of 1-6 years old, and in leisure time centres" (providing before- and after-school care), "for a child 7-12 years old" (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1994, p. 71). This legislation illustrates the active role of the central government in facilitating working parents' access to childcare arrangements.

The issue of quality is prominent in research and writing from Sweden (*see* Dahlberg & Åsén, 1994; Gunnarsson, 1993; Podmore, 1993). In 1987 the Swedish National Guidelines and Recommendations were prepared as the educational programme for all preschools, to optimise the quality of all programmes, thereby increasing the benefits for children. The guidelines, which reflect the developmental importance of the interactions between children and their environment, include principles of caregiving and play which aim to meet children's physical, social, emotional, and learning needs. The "Educational Program for Preschools" also specifies the importance of "nature" and an ecological perspective, "culture" - cultural heritage and transmission, and "society" - which includes fostering democracy, equality, and solidarity. The principle of fostering active parent involvement was also addressed in detail (Gunnarsson, 1993). Pramling (1992) has explained further that the child's understanding of the natural world is an important curriculum content area at preschools in Sweden.

As documented by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (1994), the quality standards for childcare services were set by the National Board of Health and Welfare, at the request of central government. Municipalities remain responsible for informing parents about the childcare options available in the district. Most Swedish childcare centres are owned and operated by the municipalities, but others are run co-operatively by parents or centre staff. However, more private daycare centres have been developed since they became eligible for State operating subsidies in 1992.

At a conference held in Göteborg in 1994, Andersson raised the question as to whether support for childcare services should be provided by the society/the public, or by private organisations. He reports that, until very recently, Sweden has "adopted the almost universal policy that it is a society which is responsible", and that "a very strong resistance towards private initiatives" led to a law which prohibited private, profit-making, childcare centres. Andersson notes that that law was abandoned 3 years previously (in 1991) by the "new conservative government" (Andersson, 1994, p. 9).

Andersson and colleagues summarise the Swedish policies for children in this way: "the Swedish model of family support is characterized by publicly run services for children, support for mothers' employment, support for father involvement, and support for single mothers" (Andersson, Kihlbom, & Sandqvist, 1993, p. 24). They reiterate that, to date, Swedish research has provided support for the effectiveness of publicly provided services for children. The quality of the care provided remains an important issue, and according to the research findings of Andersson and colleagues, the high quality of services has ensured that Swedish parents have not had to worry about their children's development if they have chosen to work and place their young children in daycare. Andersson *et al.* (1993) also comment:

> We should of course be aware that the success of the model may be intimately related to other aspects of Swedish culture and the Welfare State: a protective attitude to children, making harsh punishment of children unthinkable in day-care centres, medical and unemployment insurance making parental disability and unemployment no catastrophy for a family, a democratic tradition which, of course, recognizes the right for every one to choose where they want to live and choose their line of work (within the usual restrictions in a market economy). (p. 24)

Clearly, the ongoing work of Andersson and colleagues demonstrates an ecological approach, evident in their continued emphasis on the relevance of the context of policies affecting young children.

Australia

Access to Childcare

Research by Ochiltree (1991) and colleagues at the Australian Institute of Family Studies investigated the employment experiences of mothers. Their large-scale questionnaire and interview study, carried out with mothers of 5-year-old children, aimed to document mothers' reasons for working or not working, their management of home and work responsibilities, and the mothers' and children's wellbeing. Greenblat and Ochiltree (1993) report data from interviews with 728 mothers. The interview results show that, as expected, the mothers' work-force participation increased during the children's first 5 years, and the majority of the mothers who were in the paid work force worked part time. In the first 12 months of the children's lives, 16 percent of mothers were working, but by the time the children were aged 4 years, 44 percent of the mothers were in paid work. Among the mothers who were in paid work prior to the children's starting school, 16 percent reported that they had problems finding suitable childcare when they first re-entered the workforce. The main difficulty was finding childcare which met both the mother's and the child's needs. Another difficulty was in finding sufficient childcare places (although Greenblat and Ochiltree note that less than 2 percent of the total sample mentioned this as a problem). Ongoing problem areas for working mothers are identified as: transport to and from childcare, catering for childcare needs when more than one child in the family was aged under 5 years, and finding the ideal arrangement or type of care.

Another Australian study, co-ordinated by Rolfe, investigated in depth the experiences of 10 mothers with an infant in full daycare in Melbourne. Interviews with the women showed that some expressed anger at having to work, and they tended to describe their financial need to work in terms of meeting their children's needs. One mother "saw satisfaction with the day care service as central to her decision to work", turning down employment until she found a centre where she was happy with the quality of care (Rolfe, Lloyd-Smith, & Richards, 1991, p. 27). Nine of the 10 women were living with the child's father at the time of the interview. However, none of the women appeared to have help from her partner or a family member when trying to find an appropriate childcare centre to meet her child's need and enable her to return to paid work. The researchers found that women could not be categorised as "wanting to work" or "not wanting to work", because at times the women experienced feelings of both wanting to work and not wanting to work, and the "shifting balance between their needs" can lead to "changes over time, perhaps on a daily or even hourly basis" (p. 30). They recommend longitudinal research to follow through changes in women's experiences.

Australian researchers have also identified the importance of recognising women's work by "raising the status of the child care industry" (Petrie, 1992, p. 3). Some improvements in parental-leave policies have been documented by Matthews (1992), who describes the 1990 Australian Industrial Relations Commission's implementation of a provision which granted 1 year of unpaid parental leave to be shared between both parents.

Wangman (1995) notes the need in Australia for a more cohesive childcare industry. She supports a focus on quality, using the definitions and measures drawn mainly from the United States to explain the dimensions of quality. Wangman also stresses the need to address the issue of "funding" which she defines as the "government directed financial component" of the present funding system in Australia, and "affordability" of childcare, which concerned the fees component paid by families. Recent research reported by Wangman (the childcare survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics) shows that a significant percentage of the 75,000 families surveyed, who used Commonwealth-funded childcare services, would "discontinue using Long Day Care if they had to pay higher fees" (Wangman, 1995, pp. 54-55). This in turn would impact on labour-force participation. Wangman reports that, for families from all income levels, affordability of childcare is a central concern.

Employers and Childcare

The topic of work-based childcare and taking children to work has been examined in several Australian studies (e.g., Panckhurst, 1984; Jackson, 1991; Wolcott, 1993). Jackson (1991), from the Australian Institute of Family Studies, reports information on work-related childcare, and outlines the views of government officials and employers in the south-eastern Melbourne area on company-run childcare centres. He found that, in several districts, ready access to a car would be essential for mothers organising childcare arrangements and shopping, which otherwise would be "a nightmare of organising and surviving trips to a variety of destinations", and he suggests that "if work, shops and child care were close together and with ready access to public transport, such stress would be greatly reduced" (Jackson, 1991, p. 36). On the issue of company-provided childcare, Jackson concludes that the "lack of quality controls on commercial providers" was a major concern in Victoria, and that the Australian Commonwealth's promotion of work-related childcare had not led to sufficient provision of work-related childcare, or to an improvement in access to services. Therefore his final comment is: "the argument that publicly-funded child care services should be the main form of childcare provision is difficult to dismiss" (Jackson, 1991, p. 52).

Wolcott (1993), who reported the findings of interviews conducted with employers and employees at 53 small businesses, points out the difficulties some small businesses would experience if the provision of work-based childcare centres was expected of employers. She found that: "With one or two exceptions, employers did not believe that the provision of child care was an appropriate concern of small business" and that "in order to avoid this dilemma some companies deliberately did not employ women with young children" (Wolcott, 1993, p. 31). Wolcott also notes that very few of the employers had considered the possibility of contributing to a local childcare centre or collaborating with other small businesses to provide one, but several employers said they would be pleased to contribute to a local childcare centre.

New Zealand

Access to Childcare

Several New Zealand studies have noted the importance of the availability of childcare to the work-force participation of women with young children. This body of research draws on a variety of disciplines, including geography (Anderson, 1987), political studies (Ingram, 1988), economics (Horsfield, 1988), and others (Lloyd, Fergusson, & Horwood, 1989, 1990).

Anderson (1987), for example, examined the role of women with children in the labour market, and developed a framework conceptualising their employment decision making. A sample of 192 Auckland women, contacted through the North Shore Plunket Society, received a questionnaire concerned with re-entry to the work force and their employment situation. The response rate was 68 percent, and of the 132 women who replied 78 had resumed paid work since the birth of their first child and 54 had not. Women who had re-entered the paid work force after the birth of their first child were compared with women who had not. Europeans were overrepresented in the sample (93 percent). Mothers in the group who had resumed paid work tended to be slightly older, and their children were older than those of the mothers who were not in paid work (the mean age of the oldest child was 7.9 and 2.7 years respectively for the 2 groups). Anderson comments that life-cycle stage was the main determinant of the women's return to the work force. Informal childcare arrangements were prevalent, with 60 (77.9 percent) of the mothers in paid working using informal arrangements (with a partner, relative, friend, neighbour, or caring for the child themselves) and 17 (22.1 percent) using formal care (including daycare centre, school, nanny, playcentre, and kindergarten). Many women re-entered the workforce on a part-time basis. The data for children aged under 5 years, and for the children who were at primary school, were combined. This places some limitations on the interpretation of the information about the type of early childhood service used. Anderson also reports that the women's needs included more flexible childcare arrangements and more skills and confidence.

Affordable, High-quality Childcare

More recent research and policy documents have also highlighted the need for parents in paid work to have access to high-quality childcare which is flexible and affordable (e.g., Levine, Wyn, & Asiasiga, 1993; Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1994; Podmore, 1994b; The West Auckland Women's Centre, 1994).

Among mother-only families, the availability of affordable, quality childcare impacts on work-force participation. Levine, Wyn, and Asiasiga (1993) identify the major factors influencing lone parents' participation in the paid work force. In-depth, "loosely structured" interviews were conducted with 95 lone parents, 81 females and 14 males, who lived in the Wellington, Porirua, and Masterton districts. These lone parents included 67 beneficiaries, 24 ex-beneficiaries, and 4 non-beneficiaries. Of the parents who were participating in work or training, almost all used some form of care if they had a child aged under 5 years, and family or whanau members were the most prevalent providers of care for the children. Nearly three-quarters of the lone parents were in favour of, or suggested the need for, conditions of employment which allowed leave for caring for sick children. Nearly two-thirds wanted flexible hours of work, and nearly two-thirds were in favour of extending childcare subsidies to include payment to private persons, for example their own family and whanau members, for providing childcare. The researchers report a clear need for care before and after school, during the holidays, and after school hours. They recommend that "any policy measures aimed at encouraging lone parents' participation in the workforce will need to take account of the range of attitudes towards childcare and the value many parents place on being able to care for their children themselves" (Levine, Wyn, & Asiasiga, 1993, p. 25). On the basis of their interviews, Levine and Wyn (1993) conclude that "childcare was an issue which lone parents generally considered to be very problematical, affecting decisions about both employment and training" (p. 81). The major problems are identified as cost, availability, and quality (defined by the parents as trustworthiness, safety, and a loving environment).

Both lone and partnered women with young children have emphasised their need for flexible, affordable childcare. The West Auckland Women's Centre (1994) carried out interviews with women in that region who had dependants aged under 25 years. The intention was to describe the impact of changes in social policy since 1990. Participants were contacted using snowballing methods, and the findings were based on 88 structured interviews, 12 audiotaped in-depth interviews, and 1 group interview with 4 women. The researchers report that many women's comments showed that: "women's paid work is vital to most middle to low income families; for most women, paid work is a necessity not a matter of choice; changing economic circumstances have had a definite impact of the family - women are less available to their children and need more input from their partners". Women expressed lack of confidence in negotiating employment contracts and identified "special inequities for women in the Employment Contracts Act"(p. 39). Their findings on childcare are that the " key issue for women in paid work is flexibility of childcare", and that "the arrangement of affordable childcare takes a large amount of women's energy" (p. 25).

The Ministry of Women's Affairs (1993) reports the needs and recommendations of 1043 employees and 106 employers on family and employment issues. Respondents spontaneously responded to a national phone-in, or completed a written questionnaire as part of a more structured survey. Two themes evident in the respondents' comments were the need for more flexibility of employers and employees, and for mutual trust. The Ministry of Women's Affairs also held work/family seminars, and reports a follow-up survey which suggested that "full participation in the labour market depends on the availability of affordable, accessible, high quality childcare", that "the development of family friendly work practices is in its infancy in this country, and that key barriers are time and money" (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1994, p. 10).

In addition, research concerned with infants and toddlers in New Zealand childcare centres has also produced findings related to the needs of parents in paid work (e.g., Barraclough, 1994; Podmore & Craig, 1991, 1994; Smith, 1995). In a study of infants and toddlers in the childcare centres of Aotearoa, Podmore and Craig (1991, 1994) found that between 1989 and 1990 there was a marked increase in the number of children aged under 2 years attending childcare centres. As well as a larger survey of 50 percent of the childcare centres catering for children aged under 2 years in the greater Auckland and Wellington regions, an in-depth observational and interview study was carried out at 6 different types of centres. Researchers covering these 6 centres organised interviews with the parents of the 36 infants and toddlers aged 7 months to 23 months who attended full time, and with the childcare supervisors and staff working with the infants and toddlers. In 23 families, both parents agreed to be interviewed; in 10 families, only the mother was available for an interview and in 1 family only the father was available; and 2 mother-only families participated. All of the parents were in paid work, and nearly all of them were working full time. Almost all participants viewed infants' and toddlers' emotional needs as of central importance. Many parents were quite positive, but a few were not satisfied, about the extent to which infants' and toddlers' language needs were met in childcare centres. Many staff members and parents recommended that having higher ratios of staff to infants would help towards meeting infants' needs. Representatives of professional groups (from the education and health sectors) emphasised the need for changes in policies and in workplaces towards the provision of more adequate leave for parents when their young children are ill (Podmore & Craig, 1991, 1994).

Two interrelated studies completed by Smith (1995) and Barraclough (1994) provide further relevant information about infants and toddlers in childcare centres. Barraclough (1994) used questionnaires at 100 childcare centres to assess the perceptions of parents who had children aged under 2 years. Her research investigated the relationships between parents' satisfaction about the quality of their infant's centre, parents' socioeconomic circumstances, their educational background, their income, and independent ratings of centre quality. In both that study and in Smith's (1995) related study, centre ratings are recorded using the Abbott-Shim Assessment Profile and the Howes/Melhuish Observational Schedule for staff-child interactions. Barraclough found few or no relationships between parents' satisfaction and the ratings of centre quality. Parents' views were more positive than the ratings were, but parents had other concerns such as the childcare centre's cost, location, and convenience.

Smith (1995) studied the characteristics of the staff members working in the 100 childcare centres which catered for children aged under 2 years, together with aspects of centre quality. She reports that the highest levels of quality were observed in centres that were institution based or work based; the next highest levels were at community centres; and these were followed by private centres. Smith's (1995) report shows that a sample of young infants was found in the 100 childcare centres based in Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, and Hamilton in 1993. Among her total sample of 200 children aged under 2 years, 25.5 percent had started childcare at age 1 to 4 months, 28.5 percent at 5 to 8 months, and 28 percent at 9 to 12 months. This means that most children commenced attending a childcare centre when they were aged under 1 year, and many of the parents had sought centre-based care when their infants were aged under 6 months.

Combined Use of Early Childhood Education and Care Services

Several other studies which were not specifically designed to investigate the childcare arrangements of parents in paid work, have also reported some findings of relevance to this section of the review. A few studies show that parents, and in particular mothers in paid work, may opt for combined use of the early childhood services.

Since the 1980s, there has been some interest in investigating families' multiple use of early childhood education and care services (New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1987). The conclusions drawn at an NZCER seminar on "multi child care use" include the following: that families' demands for early childhood education services were becoming more diverse and complex, that diversification of these services should be explored, and that the "delivery of early childhood services must be flexible, and sensitive to the changing needs of families" (New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1987, p. 30).

Smith, Inder, and Ratcliff (1993) investigated the relationship between 103 children's experiences of different types of early childhood centres and their subsequent social behaviour in school. The children, aged 7 to 9 years, attended primary schools in Dunedin (18 schools) or Wellington (4 schools). They were assigned to 1 of 4 different groups according to their previous early childhood background:

(1) kindergarten (part-time attendance by children aged 3 and 4 years);
(2) combined concurrent childcare (with 2 or more childcare arrangements of more than 20 hours per week, for at least 1 year from birth to age 4 years);
(3) full-time childcare (more than 20 hours per week, for at least 1 year from birth to age 4 years); and
(4) combined sequential childcare (with different childcare or preschool arrangements at different ages).

In all 4 groups, some of the children had mothers who were in full-time or part-time paid work. Within group (1), the kindergarten group, 5 of the 41 children (12 percent) had mothers who were in full-time paid work, and 19 of the 41 (46 percent) had mothers who were in part-time paid work. The information reported for group (2), the combined concurrent group, shows that 10 of the 19 children (56 percent) had mothers in full-time paid work, and 5 (26 percent) in part-time paid work. Examples of the combined concurrent arrangements included using a playcentre 3 mornings and a childcare centre 2 days, or using a kohanga reo in the mornings and a childcare centre in the afternoons. In group (3), the full-time childcare centre group, 12 of the 21 children (57 percent) had mothers who were in full-time paid work, and 5 (24 percent) were in part-time paid work. Finally in group (4), the combined sequential childcare group, 7 of the 22 children (32 percent) had mothers who were in full-time paid work and 10 (46 percent) who worked part time. Although Smith *et al.'s* (1993) percentages do not account for changes in work-force participation over time, they suggest that, compared with kindergarten-only families, families using concurrent or sequential combinations of care or full-time childcare appeared to have had higher percentages of mothers in full-time paid work. All groups included some single-parent families, notably group (2) (40 percent) and group (3) (32 percent), compared with group (1) (10 percent) and group (4) (9 percent). Groups (1), (2), and (3) included either 1 or 2 families described as father-only.

Smith *et al.* report that the results of coded observations of the children's interactions with their teachers and with other children show a very low level of negative interactions with peers and with teachers. When differences in socioeconomic status and parents' school qualifications were accounted for, there were no major differences between the groups on observed behaviour or on teacher ratings of the children's behaviour. On the basis of these findings, Smith *et al.* (1993) suggest that social interaction outcomes seem similar for children who "experienced extensive non-maternal child care early" and "their peers who started kindergarten rather later" (p. 26).

Hendricks, Meade, and Wylie, who are carrying out a longitudinal study on the influences of early childhood experiences on children's competence (the *Competent Children* project), report that New Zealand patterns of early childhood centre attendance are complex, and that many of their pilot study children concurrently attended more than one type of service (Hendricks & Meade with Wylie, 1993). There were "no reports of problems for children or families" who used more than one service at the same time, although several parents said they needed to be well organised (Hendricks *et al.*, 1993, p. 30).

Podmore (1994b) found in an interview study of 60 families that there was relatively widespread use of both concurrent and sequential combinations of types of early childhood education and care services. Some parents' descriptions of these experiences are examined further in chapter 6 of this report.

Employers and Childcare

Some of the issues surrounding employer-provided childcare have been examined by Ingram (1988), who critically analyses the responses of employers ("capital") and representatives of labour ("organised labour") to the movement of New Zealand women into the paid work force. Ingram argues that employers have resisted changes made in many other industrialised countries "towards accommodating female workers, such as paid maternity leave, provision of time off for shopping, and involvement in the provision of child-care facilities" (p. 40). However, she also reports on cases, for example in the insurance industry, where the feasibility and cost benefits of providing a creche were investigated and joint provision with an established community childcare provider was recommended. She concludes that employers' concessions towards meeting women's needs "will not be as substantial or effective as political legislation" (p. 194).

In situations where on-site creches have been established in response to a labour shortage, these facilities have tended to be withdrawn at times when the companies concerned required fewer staff. For example, Ingram (1988) documents how creches, established by the woollen industry during the 1960s when there was a need to employ experienced women, were closed down or sold off soon after the economic downturn in the late 1960s. Ingram predicts similar problems in the finance and insurance industries. She points out that tying conditions of employment to arguments of economic necessity is problematic because the employment conditions can be removed rapidly when economic conditions change.

A related problem with on-site childcare provided by employers concerns the continuity of care experienced by children. Reviews of the international research on the outcomes of early childhood care and education show that stability and continuity of care are among the factors influencing the extent to which children benefit socially and educationally (e.g., Podmore, 1993, 1994a). Not only women's access to employment, but also young children's ongoing access to quality care and education, are likely to be undermined by provisions which are linked directly to economic circumstances and labour-market characteristics.

A few studies have investigated participation in paid work and childcare arrangements within specific occupational groups. For example, Gatfield and Gray (1993) carried out a postal survey of lawyers in New Zealand. They report the findings from questionnaires completed by 1469 practising lawyers who included 784 women (36 percent of whom had children) and 685 men (69 percent of whom had children). Forty percent of the women had children aged under 5 years, and 32 percent of the men had children under 5 years. Among the respondents with children, 38 percent of women and 15 percent of men had taken parental leave. Most men had taken 1 to 3 days or a week (with the duration ranging from 1 day to 5 weeks); most women had taken about 3 months (with the duration ranging from 1 week to 1 year). Gatfield and Gray found that the men were three times more likely than the women to have had a partner/spouse caring for their children during working hours, most women used a combination of caring arrangements, and respondents' arrangements to care for their sick children were sometimes facilitated by having part-time work, flexible working hours, or school-holiday leave.

Informal Childcare Arrangements

Various overseas studies have investigated related topics such as the allocation of unpaid work in the home (e.g., Goodnow & Bowes, 1994; Goodnow & Warton, 1991; Haas, 1982; Oakley, 1980; Stacey, 1991). Parents' sharing of childcare responsibilities has also been investigated internationally and in New Zealand (e.g., Podmore, 1994b; Sandqvist, 1987a, 1987b). Although a comprehensive, detailed discussion of these topics lies beyond the scope of the present review, a few recent studies are summarised to illustrate aspects of this work.

Allocation of Childcare and Domestic Work Within Households

Goodnow's Australian research provides an example of ongoing work on this topic. Recently, Goodnow and Bowes (1994) investigated non-traditional options for allocating household tasks, by carrying out in-depth interviews about the distribution of household work. The participants in their study were selected because they were likely to illustrate changes in the allocation of women's and men's responsibilities within households where both genders were represented. Participants included 50 couples, 26 of whom had children living full time at home. Most of the participants were in paid work: 90 percent of the men and 72 percent of the women were in full-time work, 6 percent of the men and 18 percent of the women were in part-time work, and 4 percent of the men and 10 percent of the women were not in paid work. Goodnow and Bowes (1994) report that there is widespread dissatisfaction with obsolete categories such as "men's work" and "women's work", that change is inhibited by ideas about relationships and by the assumption that work means paid work, and that couples tend to find ways of arranging work to fit in with their present circumstances. They recommend that research should focus on: the meanings and feelings women and men associate with (unpaid) work, on changes in definitions of work, and on changing patterns of distribution of particular jobs. They also suggest that future research should move more inclusively beyond samples of heterosexual households in order to examine work allocation and gender differences more extensively and in greater depth.

Parental Care of Children in New Zealand

The organisation of parental care of children within 2-parent families may have some relationship to the parents' participation in paid work. Smith's (1995) recent New Zealand research, which included a sample of 200 families with children aged under 2 years who attended childcare centres, shows that, in just half of the families, the mother had primary responsibility for the child's care. There were 101 families (50.5 percent) where the mother took the primary responsibility for childcare, 90 families (45 percent) where the parents said they both had primary responsibility, and 4 families (2 percent) where the father had primary responsibility. In that study, 74 percent of the mothers and 82 percent of the fathers participated in full-time paid work or study (in about 1993).

Podmore's (1994b) research provides some further information about family members' sharing of childcare and childrearing responsibilities. Interviews were carried out with a random sample of 60 New Zealand families where there were 5-year-old children. In that study, all 101 participants from 60 families were asked who had the main responsibility for caring for the 5-year-old child before he or she started school. This appeared to be primarily the responsibility of the mothers. The answer given by 33 (79 percent) of the fathers and 45 (76 percent) of the mothers, was "mainly his/her mother". In 3 (5 percent) of the families, the father had been the person with most responsibility for the child's care during the first 5 years. Other couples thought they had shared the care equally, and accordingly 5 mothers and 4 fathers replied "both of us" or "mother and father equally". Five of the women (8 percent) said that the child's grandparents had been the main caregivers: 3 said mainly the grandmother, 1 said mainly the grandfather who lived with the family and took on the main responsibility, and 1 mother said that she and the child's grandparents had shared the care equally. Members of 2 families (3 percent) who had employed a nanny replied that the parent/s and the paid caregiver had shared the caregiving responsibility. Two men, who commented that their families had been reconstituted during the past 5 years, said that they were not involved in the arrangements during the first year of the child's life. A reanalysis of the data to combine the paid work and study categories shows that 18.6 percent of mothers from the random sample had been in full-time paid work or study for at least 1 of the years when the child was aged under 2 years (around 1989 to 1990). Informal care arrangements most often involved other members of the extended family/whanau.

Within the 2-parent families, reading with the child after school was the one activity where many parents tended to share the responsibility.

Summary

Recent research studies have examined the relationships between parents' paid work and their need for, or use of, early childhood education and care services. The political, social, and economic contexts of the research studies have influenced their focus and the interpretation of findings. There has been a trend in the United States towards analysing employer-provided childcare facilities, as a part of "family friendly" practices in workplaces. There is also some evidence of this trend within Australia and New Zealand. Concomitantly, another group of researchers and developmental psychologists has emphasised the importance of policies which promote the provision of high-quality education and care services. Other issues arising from this research include the problem within families of balancing the needs of young children and parents in paid work, and the issue of combined or multiple use of the early childhood education and care services.

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CHAPTER 5

FLEXIBLE FORMS OF PAID WORK AND PARENTAL CARE OF CHILDREN

Paul Callister and Valerie N. Podmore

This chapter examines literature on some of the flexible forms of work undertaken by parents. The main focus is on part-time work as experienced by women and men. Homeworking (an employment category describing paid workers who are based in the home) is also discussed, and the costs and benefits of flexible forms of work are outlined.

Overview of Flexible Work

Taylor (1992) suggests that in the 1960s and 1970s flexibility in work arrangements was promoted primarily for the benefits to workers, in particular women, and was of relatively minor interest to mainstream company culture. However, she argues that in the 1980s the focus shifted to the benefits of flexible working arrangements for employers as well as employees.

In broad terms, there are 2 areas of labour-market flexibility - internal and external (Working Party on Industrial Relations, 1989). External flexibility concentrates on issues such as wage rates across a whole economy relative to other nations, geographic mobility (changing residence), job mobility (involving a change of employer), and occupational mobility (involving a change of skill undertaken outside the employing organisation). All these areas of work flexibility have implications for families.

According to the OECD (1994), wages as a percentage of national income generally fell back to, or even below, their early 1970 levels in most OECD countries. On one hand, if wages do not keep pace with inflation and families wish to maintain their standard of living then they are increasingly under pressure to increase earnings, by increasing their participation in paid work. But equally, not increasing wages can improve a nation's competitiveness and expand total employment, thus helping families.

Changing geographic location has always had an impact on families in terms of changing schools or childcare arrangements. These changes can have added complexities in 2-parent families where both parents are in paid work. In terms of job mobility, work by Gold and Pringle (1987) indicated that male managers are more mobile than women. In addition, more women than men expected promotion within their current workplace, while more men expected to move out of their organisation to obtain promotion. The researchers found that more women than men had an interrupted career pathway due to travel and children. However, the men also took breaks, due to study, unemployment, immigration from overseas, and travel. According to Gold and Pringle, overall stability within the same workplace differs little for women and men. But other research in Australia indicates that women are far more likely than men to have breaks from paid work of more than 3 months' duration, with most of the breaks for women linked to childbearing and rearing (Rimmer & Rimmer, 1994). Yet Block (1990) suggests that increasingly few jobs can be seen as lifelong careers for men or women. He argues that both jobs and relationships are more flexible, and now there is an end to the "linear life course" built around the "one-career, one marriage imperative" (p. 11).

According to the OECD there are 5 main areas of internal labour-market flexibility (Working Party on Industrial Relations, 1989):

- externalisation or "distancing" (putting work out, on-site subcontracting, conversion of dependent employees to self-employed status);
- functional flexibility (multiskilled work force, job mobility, semiautonomous groups, rotation);
- wage flexibility (setting wages individually and linking part of earnings to performance);
- external numerical flexibility (more flexible redundancy procedure, temporary work, fixed-term or short-term contracts); and
- internal numerical flexibility (variation of working hours, increase in shift work, weekend shifts).

Some analysts have also divided the labour market into "core" and "periphery" jobs (Atkinson, 1985). The core jobs are usually full time, often for a large organisation, are long term, and often involve a major component of on-the-job training. These jobs may have some elements of functional and wage flexibility.

Internal Numerical Flexibility: Taking "internal numerical flexibility" first, Taylor (1992) divides working hours and arrangements into 2 broad groupings, restructured full-time work and part-time work. Within restructured full-time work she notes 2 main categories, firstly, compressed work weeks and secondly, annualised or annual hours. In the first category, these are standard work weeks compressed into fewer than 5 days. Extreme examples are to be found in some specialist industries with, for example, fishing crews often working 6 weeks on and 6 weeks off, with long shifts worked while at sea. This raises the issue of problems with childcare in arrangements of work which cover weekends or evenings - but having businesses open in evenings and weekends can be "friendly" for parents who are in paid work during the week. With annualised or annual hours, working time is measured by the year rather than the week. For example, longer hours may match seasonal peaks, with shorter hours at other periods.

In addition, within full-time work (and possibly at times within part-time work) flexitime arrangements can alter standard working hours. This is where starting and stopping times are flexible, but usually with some core period required to be worked.

Definitions of full-time work vary between countries. In some other countries, including the United States and Sweden, full-time work is defined as 35 or more hours per week, while in New Zealand it is 30 or more hours per week. The actual hours of full-time work also vary between countries. For example, "Workaholics anonymous" (1994) argued that the average full-time American worker works 15 percent longer each year than the average German.

Within part-time work, Taylor suggests there are a number of options with relevance to "family" and "work", including sabbaticals/leave/employment breaks, and term-time working. The former are periods away from work without the loss of employment rights. They may be paid or unpaid, and give time out for further education or family care. Term-time working allows full-time employees who have care of children to take unpaid leave during school holidays.

Lampe (1993) suggests that part-time work in the New Zealand public service can be further divided into permanent and temporary work.

Galinsky (1989) provides further examples of part-time work, using Schering, a chemical and pharmaceutical company in the former West Germany known for its innovative part-time work policies. Schering has developed several models of part-time work. These include:

- A "traditional" model. This is linked to children attending school only in the mornings in the early years of their lives. About half of all part-time employees choose this option, but it causes some problems for employers as buildings and machinery are underutilised in the afternoon.
- Three people sharing 2 jobs.
- Shifts of 1 week on, followed by 1 week off.
- A combination of flexitime and part-time work.

External Numerical Flexibility: Some aspects of external numerical flexibility at first sight appear to be in the interests of employers rather than employees. An example is more flexible redundancy procedures. But traditional redundancy procedures, such as those based on length of service in a job, can at times work against the interests of women who have broken service through spending time at home looking after children. On the other hand, job sharing is usually an employee-requested flexibility to better balance work and family life. Ironically perhaps, having parental leave, rather than having a parent leave work after having a child, sets up a requirement to have people who are willing to work on temporary contracts.

Wage Flexibility: This flexibility involves setting wages individually and linking part of earnings to performance. Again this has a potential downside for employees if, for example, measures of performance focus on issues such as hours of work rather than actual output.

Functional Flexibility: The flexibility of multiskilling also has implications for the work/family interface. For example, if there are job rotations and multiskilling, then potentially people can more easily take time out for parental leave and sick children as they can be more easily replaced.

Externalisation or "Distancing": Externalisation can be viewed either positively or negatively according to how a particular industry is analysed, or according to a particular group's viewpoint. For a large manufacturer it may be an opportunity to cut costs and pass risk out to other small businesses, but for a skilled entrepreneur it might be an opportunity to develop a specialist niche market while having the flexibility to spend more time with the family. Included in externalisation is "homeworking" and the new technology version of "teleworking".

Clearly, there is a range of labour-market flexibilities which could be considered in relation to balancing family and paid work responsibilities. However, only 2 are explored in more detail, that of part-time paid work, and the less significant but very rapidly changing area of "homeworking".

Women and Part-time Paid Work

Some aspects of the equality *versus* difference debate are embedded in the international literature on women and part-time work. In situations where part-time workers have lower status and few benefits, there is an emphasis on reducing segregation in the work force and on enabling women to have equal access to full-time paid employment. This theme is clearly evident in a number of reports written by North American and British researchers.

United States

Researchers and policy analysts focusing on the "feminisation of poverty" have advocated reducing the economic inequalities experienced by women. Goldberg and Kremen (1990) identify occupational segregation and income inequalities as key areas where further policy development is needed in the United

States to improve equality in the labour market and for women. They point out that in the United States, types of "contingent work" including part-time work, temporary work, and homework "give employers greater flexibility in hiring, firing, and wages and fringe benefits", but disadvantage women economically and in terms of fringe benefits such as health insurance and retirement provisions (Goldberg & Kremen, 1990, p. 21).

Matthews and Rodin (1989), who examined the impact of women's changing work roles in the United States on health, families, and public policies, come to similar conclusions. Drawing on a 1988 compilation of national health, labour, and census statistics, they report that, whereas in 1960 28.5 percent of children aged under 6 years had mothers in the labour force, by 1986 50.4 percent of children aged under 6 years had mothers in the labour force. By 1987, "of the total families with children maintained by a married couple or by a woman alone, 61.7% had a mother in the labor force" (Matthews & Rodin, 1989, p. 1391). They also report that "a surprising number of employed married women work non-day shift hours" (p. 1391), and they describe flexible schedules as one new policy which assists in balancing work and family roles. However, they comment that many women in part-time work experienced low status and "few, if any, fringe benefits, with the exception of Social Security" (p. 1391).

Longitudinal studies from the United States also suggest that part-time work has been no more beneficial than full-time work to the health status of mothers in the labour force, and that this may be attributed to part-time workers receiving "lower rates of pay, fewer fringe benefits, and less opportunity for advancement" than full-time workers (Repetti, Matthews, & Waldron, 1989, p. 1398). Repetti, Matthews, and Waldron (1989) recommend that further well-designed longitudinal research is needed to examine the relationships among different types of work and different health outcomes for women with differing life circumstances and demands.

There are clearly complexities concerned with the prevalence, status, and equality of part-time work for women, both within and across countries. In their introduction to a collection of North American and British studies of working part time, Warme, Lundy, and Lundy (1992) point out that part-time workers "are a heterogeneous lot, working less than full time for a great variety of reasons" (p. 3). They note that the majority of part-time workers are classified as voluntary (in part-time paid work by choice); that part-time work might be more prevalent if there were fewer disadvantages associated with such work; that more information is needed about people who choose not to participate in paid work at all because good part-time jobs, or appropriate and affordable childcare arrangements, are not available; that there has been a "disturbing" trend in North America towards people working part time because they cannot find full-time jobs ("hidden unemployment" or the "underemployed"); and that the expansion of part-time work has reinforced occupational segregation of women and men. Drawing on more anecdotal evidence, the authors also suggest that definitions of full-time and part-time work may be gender-related social constructions which accentuate the inequality of women in the work force:

> Gender also enters the social construction of what constitutes full-time and part-time employment. For instance, a male lawyer who maintains a partial connection to a law firm while serving on the boards of other organizations is likely to be defined differently from a woman who combines her part-time legal work with unpaid labor in the home or with voluntary service organizations.
> (Warme, Lundy, & Lundy, 1992, p. 11)

Men and women who work part time do tend to be viewed differently in society in North America. An experimental study by Eagly and Steffen (1986) shows that both men and women who worked part time were perceived to be less "agentic" (defined as active, not easily influenced, aggressive, independent, dominant, self-confident, competitive, and persistent) than their counterparts who worked full time. Part-time employment was also perceived to be linked to different life situations for women and men. For women, part-time work was believed to be associated with domestic duties; whereas for men, part-time work was seen as linked to difficulty in securing full-time paid work.

Clearly, in the United States there appears to have been a gender gap in parents' time use, and in their participation in part-time work. Shelton (1992) reports that the United States census figures have shown that the more children men have, the more time they spend in the work force; whereas the more children women have, the less time they spend in paid labour. However, among men and women with 2 or more children, the difference in time spent in paid work has declined (with the women spending 67.4 percent as much time in paid labour as men in 1975, and 75.5 percent in 1987). Shelton advocates changing the structure of work to co-ordinate household responsibilities and paid work, both for women and for men.

Other writers have also presented more positive future scenarios of women in part-time work. For example, Monty (1992), based in Canada, comments positively on the potential of job-sharing schemes in North America.

Kahne (1992) highlights the need to reconceptualise part-time work. She points out that "old concept" part-time work clearly meant fewer benefits for part-time workers. For example, 84 percent of part-time workers in the United States had no direct health benefits through their employment, whereas 78 percent of full-time workers received health insurance as a benefit in 1990. However, "new concept" part-time work, which was introduced into both the public and private sectors from the 1960s up to the 1980s, had qualities such as permanent tenure, job sharing or work sharing, pay equivalent to full-time work, and some benefits. Kahne traces the changes in the labour market which occurred after World War II, including changes in the supply of labour and demand for labour and a rise in interest in part-time work. She notes that there had been sharp increases in the labour-force participation of different groups of women over the decades. Immediately after the war the increase was among mothers with grown children; in the 1950s, it was mothers with school-aged children; during the 1960s and 1970s, the increase was among mothers with preschool-aged children; then during the 1980s, it was among women with infants aged under 1 year. On the demand side, the increasing numbers of women in the labour force, changes in retirement and education patterns, and changes in values had all led to the suppliers of labour showing a greater interest in part-time employment which, as a result of changes in demand, was predominantly in the service area. Kahne stresses that part-time schedules were feasible across a wide range of occupations, that part-time workers have often enhanced productivity, and that it was now necessary to look at how to provide security and protection for part-time workers. She recommends that more research on "new concept" part-time work is needed, and concludes:

> If the American work place can combine a new baseline of federal standards, New Concept part-time jobs jointly developed by labor and management, and thoughtful evaluation of experience, we should be able to forge arrangements in which hope becomes a reality and the peril of losing the advantage of more flexible work scheduling evaporates. (p. 308)

United Kingdom

Compared with both the United States and most other European countries, the United Kingdom has a high incidence of part-time work among women (e.g., Dex, 1992; Drew, 1992; Harrop & Moss, 1994). Elias (1990) shows that during the 1980s women's part-time work increased significantly in the service sector.

Harrop and Moss (1994) report that, between 1985 and 1991 in the United Kingdom, there was rapid growth in the employment of women with children, despite a general drop in employment rates in 1990 to 1991. By 1991, the employment rate for mothers with children under 10 years was 51 percent, but Harrop and Moss note that this placed the United Kingdom employment rates for mothers only in the middle rank of the countries in the European Union (EU). In 1991, the United Kingdom had the second-lowest rate of full-time employment for mothers with children aged under 10 years (16 percent, compared with the EU average of 31 percent), and the highest level of part-time employment (equal with the Netherlands at 35 percent, compared with the EU average of 20 percent). In addition, the hours worked by those in part-time paid work in the United Kingdom were considerably shorter than the hours worked by part-timers in all other European countries except the Netherlands.

Clearly, concerns have been raised about the status of British women employed in the part-time work force (Dex, 1992, Briar, 1992a). Dex (1992) compares women's part-time work in the United States and Britain, and discusses influences on the extent of women's part-time employment, the types of jobs available on a part-time basis, and women's reasons for participating in part-time paid work. She reports that, during the 1980s, part-time work became increasingly more prevalent among British women than among women in the United States, and women working part time in Britain were more likely to be engaged in low-level occupations than their counterparts in the United States.

Briar (1992a), who analysed policies and part-time work in the United Kingdom within their historical and political contexts, argues that in Britain, participation in paid work for less than 30 hours per week had been virtually non-existent earlier this century, prior to World War II. She describes how part-time work subsequently was promoted by government policies, until by the 1980s it became the predominant pattern of paid work among married women. Lack of a consistent policy on the provision of subsidised childcare appeared to be one reason for British women's participation in part-time, rather than full-time, paid work. Briar contends that part-time work had benefited employers by providing a source of flexible, temporary labour. It had also spared men from having women competing with them for the higher-status jobs with upwardly mobile prospects. State policies had permitted employers to have fewer obligations to protect part-time workers; for example, many employers had been exempted from paying National Insurance contributions against unemployment and accident to cover part-time workers. Consequently, Briar concludes that part-time work had been associated with fewer clear benefits for women:

> While the value to women of at least partial independence and some participation in outside social life cannot be underestimated, part-time work should not be construed as promoting equality in either the home or the work force. . . . Currently, one effect of the continued expansion of part-time employment appears to be the undermining of the equal pay, equal opportunity, and employment protection legislation. (p. 83)

Public policy in Britain has been based on a model of permanent, full-time work. Hewitt (1993), who summarises this as "48 hours for 48 weeks for 48 years" (p. 1), explains that this model does not now fit industrialised countries because the majority of women, and also increasing numbers of men, can expect to work part time at some point in their careers. According to Hewitt, the pattern of working the "normal" working day or week is becoming a minority one; the emerging post-industrial style of working is "a model much closer to female, than to male, patterns of the past"; and the suspicion found among feminists and unionists of flexible work arrangements, although sometimes justified, has been based on the limited and "unstated assumption that 'real' employment is full-time, life-time employment" (p. 6). As well as commenting that the categories used to define working arrangements are out of date, Hewitt notes an overlap among categories like part-time work, job sharing, and individualised working hours, which may appear virtually identical. Hewitt argues that the traditional male model of work is not compatible with raising children or caring for dependants; and that employers cannot ignore potential conflicts between work and family responsibilities any longer, when half of the new graduates in Britain, half of the newly qualified doctors and lawyers, and a third of accountants, are women. She also contends that fair flexibility of hours is needed in workplaces, with a reorganisation of the long hours of work previously expected of women and men, in order to avoid the gap between the length of the school day and the normal working day.

Sweden

Rosenthal (1990) reports that, although Swedish women have a very high rate of labour-force participation, nearly half of the female work force works part time, and there is certainly some persisting occupational segregation and inequality. Policies influencing the high rates of part-time work for women include: the taxation system, which allows part-time workers to retain a higher percentage of their incomes because marginal tax rates increase as salaries increase; and the structure for receipt of benefits, which permits women who work part time to be eligible for childcare, holiday pay, sick pay, and parental insurance (Rosenthal, 1990; Sundström, 1987).

The wider policy and funding context clearly influences women's choice of part-time work in Sweden. Sandqvist's (1987a) research also suggests that the life styles of specific families influence women's participation in part-time paid work. Sandqvist has analysed a Swedish time study carried out in the 1980s, which sought people's responses about the actual hours they worked "yesterday". The data showed that in 2-parent families where mothers worked full time, the fathers were working 47 hours per week; whereas when mothers worked part time, the fathers spent around 35 hours per week in paid work. She suggests that:

> These figures create an impression of spouses being more or less work-oriented as a couple, rather than complementing each other. Whether this is due to a choice of life-style or economic necessity cannot be determined from these data. However, a life-style interpretation is supported when the hours spent in gardening and home repairs by couples are considered: In the families where mother works part time, the couples spend 12 hours per week on those tasks, when mother works full time, a mere 3 hours. (p. 53)

It appears, then, that studies of women's part-time work need to examine hours of work-force participation and scheduling of paid work within families. This would yield further information on how families follow varying life styles and have different priorities.

Changing gender roles and women's part-time work have been examined further by Haas (1993), who reports data from a 1986 Gothenburg survey of beneficiaries of parental leave, which showed that only 6 percent of mothers, but 75 percent of fathers, would prefer to work full time. Haas proposes that, on the basis of the Gothenburg study, Swedish women are unlikely to choose to work longer hours in order to be more equal to men, because the 30-hour week most of them work currently enables them to balance their parenting and employment roles. She concludes that:

> What would seem more conducive to gender equality in the family would be a reduction in men's work hours via a 30-hour workweek for all. The 30-hour week has been a demand of feminists in the Social Democratic Party for two decades and was more recently taken up as a cause by two small political parties, the Environmental Party and the Left (formally Communist) Party. This reform,

> however, is considered utopian by employers and trade union leaders, who reject it as a threat to growth and workers' purchasing power. (p. 254)

This conclusion appears consistent with the recommendations of the British researcher Hewitt (1993).

Australia

Findings from a household questionnaire survey of 1907 women by the Australian Bureau of Statistics suggest that very few women were able to choose the hours of their paid work. It was clear that almost all of their jobs were available on a part-time basis, an option available to markedly fewer men. Women tended to describe the best job they had held during their working life as one which was full time, and had promotion prospects and security. According to the researchers, this suggests "a high degree of discontent in the female labour market. It also implies that women do not want to be in their secondary labour market jobs" (Rimmer & Rimmer, 1994, pp. 83-84).

New Zealand

In New Zealand there are major differences between sole mothers and partnered mothers in overall participation in paid work, and hours of such work. While the labour-force participation of sole mothers is significantly lower than that of partnered mothers, particularly when children are very young, when they are in paid work they are more likely to work full time than part time. This is the situation even when children are under 1 year of age (Statistics New Zealand, 1993).

Part-time work is more common amongst partnered mothers with preschool-aged children if they have a tertiary qualification and their partner also has a tertiary qualification. A more complex picture emerges with part-time work for partnered mothers with school-age children. The highest level of part-time work is to be found when fathers have a university qualification and mothers have an "other" tertiary qualification. This "other" category includes trades training as well as nursing and teaching (Statistics New Zealand, 1994).

In 1991 in families where the father had low income, partnered mothers were least likely to be in paid work. Linked to this was the finding that partnered mothers were most likely to work part time if their partners worked full time, and least likely to work part time if their partners were not in the labour force. This trend was present among partnered mothers from the time when their children were very young through the school years (unpublished census data). Only 10 percent of partnered mothers with a child under 5 years worked part time when the father earned $7,500 or less, but this almost tripled to reach a peak of 29 percent when the father earned between $40,000 and $50,000 per year (Statistics New Zealand, 1994). Further census data regarding partnered mothers and part-time paid work are set out in chapter 7.

The Household Labour Force Survey also provides data on women and part-time work. Unfortunately it is not possible to identify those women who are mothers of young children, or if they are part of a 1- or 2-parent family. Since 1991, the number of women working part time has slowly increased. At the same time, the number wanting to work longer hours has increased at roughly the same rate. In March 1994, just over a quarter of women working part time wanted more hours of paid work. The most prevalent barrier to these women actually working longer hours was a lack of suitable jobs. Over all, in March 1994 just over 10 percent of women who worked part time, but wanted more hours, stated that childcare or family issues prevented them from increasing their hours.

Some women want to work longer hours, including moving into full-time work, whereas other women who are not in paid work want to move into part-time work. For example, in 1991, just under 5 percent of partnered mothers with a child aged under 1 year were seeking part-time work, with the rate declining slowly once children reached school age (*see* chapter 7). In addition, it is likely there will be some women working full time who want to work part time. Unfortunately, in the latter case, such data are not obtained in official surveys, so while "under employment" can be measured, "over employment" is more elusive.

Several New Zealand studies have investigated or commented upon part-time work among women with young children (e.g., Briar, 1992b, 1995; Davidson, 1994; Davidson & Bray, 1994; Disley & Willcox, 1994; Dixon, 1985; Ingram, 1988). The question of access to part-time work has been raised, and both the risks and the future possibilities of part-time work have been explored.

Disley and Willcox (1994) summarised international research on the effect of women's work on families, and the impact of unemployment on women. On the basis of the research literature, and the opinions of a sample of New Zealand women, they conclude that, for women combining paid work with family life, the number of roles is less likely to be a source of stress than the difficulties within each role. They observe that: "In particular, the degree to which a woman believes that what she is doing is right for her is the main determinant of how happy she is in her role or roles" (p. 104). Disley and Willcox also note that in New Zealand at the time they were writing, "the abatement levels of benefits [had] discouraged solo women from moving into part time work" (p. 33).

Concern has also been documented by other researchers within New Zealand about the "underemployment" of some women who are seeking work and have young children. A study by the Society for Research on Women, Christchurch Branch (1994), found that, among their total sample of 46 women aged 18 to 57 years who were experiencing difficulties in obtaining employment, there were 9 women who were "underemployed". The 9 women had temporary, casual, part-time work. They tended to be unable to get sufficient hours of paid work in the late 1980s after having children.

The conditions and hours of part-time work carried out by New Zealand women show wide variations. Dixon's (1985) in-depth study looks at part-time employment in 2 contrasting areas of the health sector - registered nursing staff and hospital domestic workers. Although aspects of health-sector employment have changed since her research was done, some of her conclusions remain relevant. For example, she found that women's part-time work is "highly differentiated", with both high-quality and low-quality jobs. Dixon also suggested that there was a need for further development of part-time paid work for women. She proposed that this would be facilitated if there were concrete incentives for employers and a reduction in the opposition from unions and professional associations.

Davidson and Bray (1994) report a study of women and part-time work, concentrating on women who worked in the retail, service, education, and health sectors, which are all areas where women are in the majority and where there has been a recent increase in part-time work. In each sector, interviews were initiated with 13 "key informants" who represented employers or workers. Focus-group discussions took place later in Wellington, Christchurch, and Rotorua with women who worked in those sectors. The focus-group interviews showed that in all sectors there were women who chose to work part time, and women working part time who did not make this choice. The authors contend, however, that none of the women chose the construction of work as "just part time", or the associated unfavourable conditions. From the data collected at the key informant interviews, they outline the problems for women working part time in the retail sector as: social costs, decreasing hours and intensification of work, few career prospects, reduced conditions (in some supermarkets), and discrepancies between full-time and part-time workers. Difficulties found in the service sector and in the education sector were: reduced conditions and insecurity, and discrepancies between full- and part-time workers. They also report that reduced conditions were an implication of working part time in the health sector. Interviews with key informants indicated that conditions for part-time workers had deteriorated amidst, what Davidson and Bray (1994) describe as, "the competitive pressures of deregulation and the increased ability of employers to set conditions under the Employment Contracts Act (1991)." (p. 69)

Davidson (1994) points out that during the last decade there have been changes in "the broader economic and industrial relations environment within which part-time work occurs" (p. 151). On the basis of his research, he concludes that women "carry the disproportionate cost of [the] new-found flexibilities" (p. 156).

Since moving to New Zealand from Britain, Briar (1992b, 1995) has been advocating that part-time employment here needs to be reconstructed to meet women's needs. Briar (1992b) contends that the "definition of part-time employment as paid work of less than 30 hours per week" hides the range of experiences of part timers, who work "anything from 1 to 29 hours" per week (p. 78). She proposes that the terms and conditions of part-time work would be improved by making them comparable to those available in full-time positions. The conditions she recommends include: staff training, fringe benefits, voluntary choice of part-time work, permanent positions, and "job shares (but not job splits, of the kind sponsored by the British government)" (p. 84). Briar (1992a, 1995) also suggests that both a shorter working day for everyone, and a minimum living wage for all, would help overcome the economic dependence experienced by some part-time workers and many women.

Men and Part-time Paid Work

Introduction

Gleisner and Rasmussen (1995) cite OECD research which indicates that between 1980 and 1990 most OECD countries had a rise in part-time male workers. The biggest change was in the Netherlands where part-time female workers as a percentage of full-timers dropped from 61.7 percent to 44 percent, but men grew from 5.5 percent to 15.8 percent. However, in all the countries women are far more likely than men to work part time.

United States

Part-time work is common amongst young single men in the United States, with such jobs often found within service industries such as supermarkets or fast-food outlets. Part-time work will often be combined with study, particularly as tertiary study is generally on a user-pays basis. Because of the relatively high rate of part-time work amongst men, and the relatively low rate of part-time work amongst women, men form a third of the part-time work force, as against just under 20 percent in Sweden and 15 percent in the United Kingdom ("The War Between the Sexes," 1994). However, as in most countries, part-time work for fathers of young children is not common.

Friedan (1982) has argued that, as people postpone having children until they are over 30 years of age and have only 1 or 2 children, both parents should be able to work out flexible parental leave which will not hurt their careers and will give them time with their children. Friedan advocates balancing the movement of women into paid work with men moving into the family, with both working part time in paid work. Taylor (1992) also cites studies from the United States which indicate that men are beginning to want the same kind of flexibility women have wanted for some time. These studies, Taylor argues, indicate that men are wanting this flexibility to pursue study or have more time for leisure or family. Other United States studies indicate an increasing number of workers who are willing to trade off the "fast track" for a life with a better balance between work and home (Friedman & Galinsky, 1991; Gerson, 1993). Moen and Dempster-McClain (1987), in a study of dual-income American families, also suggest that a significant proportion of both mothers and fathers find that the work-time demands of their jobs are greater than they would prefer and that they would like to spend more time with their spouse and children.

Tong (1992), however, suggests that Friedan's ideal of both parents in 2-parent families working part time is too optimistic. She suggests that "some couples are willing and able to stop running the rat race, but others are able but not willing, and yet others are willing but not able" (p. 26). She remarks that 2 parents in high-income occupations may live very well on 2 part-time salaries, but 2 parents in low-income jobs cannot. This is noted also by Schor (1991), who suggests that in a period of declining real incomes the bottom income groups in the United States have only kept up incomes by working longer hours.

Schor also cites American research which indicates that males aged 25 to 44 years have virtually no opportunity to reduce hours of paid work (Kahn & Lang, 1987). This is also supported by the research of Moen and Dempster-McClain (1987) who, however, also suggest that it is not just workplace attitudes which prevent men taking up part-time work. In their study of dual-income American families they found that few wives want their husbands to spend fewer hours in paid work. This may be a rational response for wives, as Schor suggests that in the United States if men move to part-time work it will usually be at low pay, with few benefits. She argues that in terms of maximising family income and ensuring time with children the status quo is reinforced in that women's choice to work part time is less problematic as they are already discriminated against in full-time work.

Continental Europe

While only small numbers of men in Europe work part time there are some indications that for many men this represents an ideal to aim at. For example, one European study indicated that a significant proportion of both men and women would work part time if they were given a completely free choice. About 80 percent of women and 40 percent of men would prefer not to work full-time when their children were under school age (Kiernan, 1992).

Prenzel and Strumpel (1990) argue, on the basis of interviews with 500 German men who either worked part time or were "househusbands", that househusbands were largely disillusioned by their role, while part-time workers expressed overwhelmingly favourable attitudes. While the latter had to overcome prejudices in the workplace, they felt highly rewarded by the greater interaction with their children and female partner. The researchers comment that part-time work for men could become a model for public policies directed toward the revitalisation of the family and reduction of unemployment. They suggest that the main barriers of implementing this model are rigid work schedules that do not conform to the changed needs and aspirations of many family-oriented younger men.

In Denmark, Pruzan (1994) also suggests that on the basis of attitude surveys almost half of the young men surveyed would find part-time work ideal for themselves while they have young children. In Denmark the attitudes of mothers towards fathers working part time appears to have changed; in 1970 only 15 percent of mothers with young children thought that both parents working part time would be an ideal paid-work/childcare option, but by 1985, 46 percent preferred this option. The next most popular option (at 33 percent) was for the father to work full time while the mother worked part time (Kiernan, 1992).

Sweden

Haas (1990), in her study of couples who had taken parental leave, found that in comparison to men who had not taken leave, men who had taken leave were more likely to prefer part-time work over full-time work and to work fewer days. But they also reported a larger drop in job satisfaction levels over pre-birth levels than other men. Over all however, men only form 18 percent of the part-time work force in Sweden ("The War Between the Sexes," 1994), and few men work part time when children are young.

Stafford and Sundström (1994) found that part-time work for men has an earnings-growth cost for men. Like taking parental leave, it potentially sends a "signal" to employers that men are not committed to their careers. Yet Haas (1990) suggests that, in contrast to the United States ideal of achieving equality in the workplace by increasing women's hours of work, equalisation of parents' employment opportunities in

Sweden might be just as likely to come about through a lowering of men's involvement in the labour market as in the raising of women's involvement.

New Zealand

In the 1980s and early 1990s there was a dramatic drop in the number of men in full-time jobs. However, part-time work for men increased over this period. Part-time work for women can be explained, in general, by a need, or wish, to organise paid work around childcare arrangements. Although a high proportion of men working part time are in the 15-to-19 and over-60 age groups, much of the recent growth has been in the 20-to-59 age group. This growth, however, appears in general not to be linked to an increasing involvement in childcare, but instead to weak demand in the labour market and employer-led labour-market "flexibility" strategies (Callister, 1993; Gleisner & Rasmussen, 1995). Burgess, Gleisner, and Rasmussen (1995) suggest that in New Zealand the public sector is leading the way in such "flexible" arrangements.

According to the 1991 census, 38 percent of men who worked full time had dependent children under 15, whereas this drops to 18.2 percent for men who worked part time. In 1986 the comparable figures were 39.9 percent and 21.8 percent. In 1986 a total of 2.9 percent of men in 2-parent families, with the youngest child under 5 years of age, worked part time. This rose to 3.1 percent in 1991. This 1991 figure rises to 5.8 percent if the United States definition of part-time hours, that is less than 35 per week, is used. Ethnicity of the parents has a significant effect. In 1991, if both parents were Maori, 4.5 percent of the fathers worked part time; this drops to 3.6 percent if either parent is Maori, and reduces further to 2.9 percent if neither is Maori.

Only a very small number of parents with a child aged under 5 years both worked part time: 0.6 percent in 1986, rising to 0.8 percent in 1991. In 60 percent of situations where the father works part time in a 2-parent family with a preschool-aged child, the partner is not in paid work. Working part time is also not common amongst sole fathers who, if they are in paid work at all, are more likely to work full time. In 1991, 3.1 percent of Maori sole fathers with a child under 5 worked part time, as compared with 3.9 percent of non-Maori sole fathers.

While official statistics indicate that part-time work for men is very unusual in managerial or professional occupations (Callister, 1993), and is also uncommon for men with young children, such situations do exist. For example, a media article describes a male manager at Treasury working around the hours of his primary-school-age child (Smith, 1994).

Gleisner and Rasmussen (1995) suggest that part-time work needs to be seen in a less gender-specific way. They argue that this will require 2 key changes. Employers need to see beyond part-timers as being low-cost workers. Instead, quality and flexibility are aspects of part-time work that should be focused on. Second, they contend that paid work needs to be changed from "a system defined by and for full-time men" (p. 2). They suggest that paid work needs continuous retraining and upskilling, but many male employees are faced with growing job pressures, and pressures to share equally at home. Gleisner and Rasmussen suggest that part-time work may be a way of "simultaneously alleviating pressures associated with work and accommodating family responsibility, social interests and educational needs" (p. 2).

Australia

Rimmer and Rimmer (1994), using data from an Australian Bureau of Statistics survey, found that 83.9 percent of women thought their jobs could be carried out on a part-time basis, but this dropped to 63.3 percent for men. They argue that "men's relatively limited opportunities for part-time work must be some constraint on the capacity to share equally the household tasks" (p. 84). But like part-time work for women, part-time work for men in Australia tends to be in the secondary labour market. For example, a 1991 survey of male part-time employees found that they had lower hourly pay rates than full-time employees, 70 percent did not receive any formal training from their employer, and 75 percent reported that they did not have a career structure (Burgess, Gleisner, & Rasmussen, 1995).

Homeworking

"Homeworking" appears to offer the potential for dissolving the boundaries between the public and private spheres, and to reintegrate paid work and family life. Shamir (1992) notes a distinction between telework and remote work. Remote work includes activities such as piecework sewing. In addition, Shamir also draws a distinction between working at home and from home.

Loveridge (1993), using New Zealand census data, estimates that approximately 3 percent of the non-farm work force was working at home in 1991. She argues that homeworking "appears to be associated with minority groups with limited access to the labour market" (p. 57). However, she also suggests that some of the "minority groups", such as women with young children, are relatively large. Over all, the proportion of women in the general work force was 41 percent in 1991, but women made up 62 percent of those working at home. But Anderson, Brosnan, and Walsh (1994) suggest, from a New Zealand survey of homeworkers that, although it was a highly feminised workforce, it was not casualised.

In general, while the literature suggests that working at home can at times improve family life, including reducing the need for out-of-home childcare, combining paid work at home and looking after children is often problematic (Christensen 1988; Costello, 1988; Gerson & Kraut, 1988; Hall, 1990; Metzger & Von Glinow, 1988; Olson & Primps, 1984; Shamir, 1992). Olson and Primps, however, note that the impact of working at home is not the same for everyone. For those in professional occupations, and for men and women without the primary responsibility for looking after children, work at home can help integrate paid work and family life by giving these people increased control over their time and reducing their need to commute. In addition, Hamilton (1987) and Christensen (1988) suggest homeworking can be useful in a number of specific, often short-term, situations such as looking after a sick child or during a period of maternity or paternity leave.

In contrast, other researchers are now questioning whether the technology which allows working from a remote site has more potential to affect family life negatively than to enhance it. For example, an American fax-in survey by the magazine *Information Week* ("The Longest Day", 1994) suggests new technology is leading to longer hours of work in the United States. A majority of respondents felt that they now had less time to spend with family and felt "tethered" - often round the clock - by means of pagers, cellular phones, and computer modems.

Costs and Benefits For Employers of Flexible Work and "Family-Friendly" Work Practices

Flexible Forms of Work

Employers have increasingly been calling for more flexibility in the labour market in the belief that this will lead to increases in productivity. But can employee-led labour-market flexibility also be of benefit to firms, or does it simply represent a cost?

Flexible Hours of Work

Hours of work, such as working part time, is one of the main flexibilities discussed. The OECD (1994) argues that less rigid arrangements for daily, weekly, annual, and life-time working hours could meet both enterprise requirements and workers' aspirations. They would permit firms to better exploit their productive capacities by matching production more closely to shifts in demand. Workers and their families would also gain from new working-time arrangements tailored to their individual preferences or family circumstances. The OECD goes on to note that the type of working-time flexibility sought by firms may not always coincide with the aspirations of workers. According to the OECD, the best way to resolve such conflicts is through negotiated solutions at decentralised levels. However, the OECD also suggests that governments have a role to play in this process, firstly by removing obstacles to, and facilitating reductions in, working time, and secondly, by reviewing taxation and social security provisions which discriminate against part-time work. It also argues that governments should extend part-time working in the public sector.

Warme, Lundy, and Lundy (1992) also argue that employers, state, and unions all have their role in shaping part-time work. They suggest that employers who make investments in human resources want employees who make long-term commitments, and therefore they should accommodate workers' preferences for flexible work.

Some of the new flexibilities sought by employers may in fact impinge on family life; for example, working a Sunday shift at a supermarket may reduce the time a parent has with children. Yet for other families the ability to shop at the weekend may relieve the stress of fitting in shopping within the standard working week. Part-time work or shift work may also be at times when childcare facilities are not usually available. As discussed in relation to women and part-time work, some researchers suggest while employers see advantages in part-time work for jobs on the "periphery" of the economy, they see little evidence of employers seeing value in introducing flexible hours of work into "core" jobs, except perhaps the "flexibility" to work long hours.

In analysing the very long hours of many full-time workers in the United States, particularly those in management, Schor (1991) argues that capitalism has created strong incentives for employers to keep hours of paid work long and inflexible. Schor suggests that, in the early stages of capitalism, payment took the form of a fixed daily wage so employers had an incentive to demand long hours of work for a fixed price. She argues that this would reappear in the guise of a fixed annual salary. Schor suggests that, although employees might be nominally employed for a 40-hour week, if employers can in fact get 60 hours of work then it is in their interests to set up norms of long hours of work. Schor also suggests that often employers want to keep machines, or other plant, operating continuously so again this can encourage long hours. Finally she notes that in the United States fringe benefits are often paid on a "person" basis, so again discouraging short hours of work.

Schor also argues that in America the long hours of paid work are often reinforced by performance bonuses being paid in terms of extra earnings rather than additional time off. But she notes there are cultural variations. For example, she argues that European workers want a more leisured society, but this concept is not strong in America, both in the workplace and in the home. "Workaholics anonymous" (1994) also tries to explain why Americans work long hours in paid work when compared with Europeans. They suggest one reason has been the fall in real earnings of many Americans. But they also show that many highly skilled workers, who have enjoyed big increases in their pay, have also been working harder. They suggest that taxes may come into the issue with falls in marginal tax rates in the United States since the 1970s having made it more profitable to work longer. In addition they suggest that the widening of wage differentials has further strengthened the incentive to try harder, by making promotion more rewarding.

Other researchers have suggested that long hours also act as a "signal" to employers of an employee's loyalty and commitment. Warme, Lundy, and Lundy (1992) argue that language is important. Where time is "commodified" and people discuss "saving", "spending", "losing", and "wasting" time, the term "part time" is not neutral. It has negative connotations implying: weak commitment, lack of ambition, and little interest in money rewards of paid work. But Stone (1994) suggests that employers and employees need to "rethink this logic which equates long hours with superior performance and workaholism with commitment" (p. 110). In terms of finding a flexible balance between work and family she suggests that there is a need to think about the concept of "quality time" at work as well as at home. Schor (1991) argues that labour markets are particularly inflexible in terms of hours of work for men, with the hours set by employers' not workers' preferences.

In New Zealand, there is some evidence that average full-time hours for both men and women have increased since the late 1980s. According to data from the Household Labour Force survey, between 1987 and 1994 men's full-time hours have increased by 1.4 hours to reach, on average, 42.95 hours per week; while women's have increased by 0.54 hours to reach, on average, 37.79 hours per week. This also means the gap between hours of full-time paid work for women and men has increased (Statistics New Zealand, 1995).

Part-time work for management is often seen as particularly problematic for employers. Loveman (1994) argues that, as well as the issue of commitment, employers worry that in accepting part-time work for senior positions, such as law partners, there are issues such as whether clients will accept less than full-time coverage and what part-time actually means in terms of hours (if a 40-hour week equates to 70 hours in the office, what does a job that is 25 hours per week actually represent?). In addition, in terms of allowing senior women to work part time to find a balance with family life, Loveman raises the issue of what other senior women will think if they have had to show "sameness" relative to male managers.

But there appear to be some potential advantages for employers to open up "core" work to part timers. For example, Warme, Lundy, and Lundy suggest that, if disadvantages to part-time work were removed, then such work would draw in people who are currently not employed as well as attracting some who are currently employed full time. This would provide a wider pool from which employers could choose their work force. Schor cites British and United States studies which indicate that shorter working hours can lead to higher productivity (Levine & Tyson, 1990; Nyland, 1989).

Flexibility in Work Location - Working from Home

Saltford and Heck (1989) suggest that allowing employees to work at home could reduce some of the employers' overhead costs, such as office space. In addition, at times homeworking arrangements may help to recruit or retain staff. But the researchers also suggest that many organisations are concerned about supervising work, including the quality of the work.

The "Family Friendly" Workplace

The "family-friendly" workplace can involve a range of flexibilities offered to employees with family responsibilities. Researchers have now started to try and look at the benefits to companies of providing a package of "family friendly" benefits, rather than looking only at the productivity of a specific benefit such as flexitime.

Johnson (1993) argues that for employers in the United States there is in fact a cost entailed in not providing work-family assistance. This is in terms of sick children, childcare breakdowns, and other child-related events which correlate directly to higher absenteeism and lower concentration at work. But Johnson also argues that there are long-term stresses which can lead to lowered productivity. She went on to suggest that parents' marriages suffer, and their mental and physical health can suffer. In addition, workers may turn down jobs or not be attracted to particular workplaces because of issues such as relocation practices, travel, or overtime conflict with family priorities.

Johnson provides examples of United States companies where internal research indicates that "family-

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friendly" work practices appear to be cost effective. For example, AEtna Insurance Company was estimated to cut its turnover among high-performing women by 50 percent for 3 years running by extending the length of its maternity leave and making it possible to return from leave on a part-time basis. She also cited a major study at the health-products company Johnson and Johnson. This company had implemented a broad array of work and family-supportive policies including several on-site childcare centres, work-family training for managers, flexible work arrangements, and family relocation assistance. According to Johnson, a survey was administered in 1990 to employees to provide baseline information. A similar survey was conducted in 1992 to see if any change had occurred. Over half of the employees felt their work environment had improved as a result of the work-family programmes, and the number who felt they would be penalised for using such policies halved. In addition there was a doubling of the number of employees who said they felt comfortable raising work-family issues with their managers.

Kraut (1992) argues that quite a number of leading American companies have undertaken their own in-house research on work and family issues, but the results have not been widely publicised. Kraut contends that this is partly because in many cases the findings have been considered sensitive or proprietary, with the data sometimes showing widespread dissatisfaction with some company policies and practices. But Kraut also suggests that there is a lack of incentives for researchers employed by industry to publish the outcomes in professional journals. It is especially daunting to non-academic-based investigators to meet the rigorous standards of many research-based periodicals. But Kraut suggests much of the research is shared in informal settings.

However, there is a small number of studies undertaken by more independent researchers. One relatively recent study looks at links between total quality management (TQM) and work-family issues in a large United States manufacturer (Chicago University, 1993). In the study, the researchers argue that the interest of employers in adopting family-responsive policies is largely a response to the changing demographic characteristics of the United States work force, most notably the decrease in the number of men entering the labour force and the increase in the number of women doing so. As a result, recruiting and retaining women is becoming increasingly important to employers. Family-responsive policies are viewed as a way of making workplaces more attractive to women who often have the primary responsibility of caring for their homes, children, and elderly or ill relatives.

The actual research was carried out at the Fel-Pro manufacturing business in the United States, an employer of 2000 people. Fel-Pro was a "family"-owned business with a range of family-supportive policies such as on-site childcare, summer camps, employing older children in holidays, offering education scholarships for children, and company-funded nurses when children are sick. Results from the study indicated that family-friendly policies can play a key role in encouraging workers to support organisational change. The study also showed that family-friendly policies are not enough to ensure that workers will perceive their company as supportive and will support and participate in initiatives to improve quality and productivity.

Osterman (1994) also studied manufacturing establishments in the United States, and while the primary focus was not family-friendly work practices, he touches on this issue. Osterman found a number of factors linked with workplace reform (adoption of "just-in-time", TQM, team working, etc.), including that establishments which believe that they have responsibility for employee welfare (including their families) are more likely to adopt innovative work practices.

Adams *et al.* (1994), in a review of mainly United States and New Zealand research, argue that while much of the literature suggests that the work and family issues can affect productivity, there is very little research which conclusively shows financial benefits of developing family-friendly policies. They go on to say that without such research it will be difficult to convince employers to help employees in their family life.

Finally, Kingston (1990) suggests that ultimately the main way employers can support families is through offering job security and good pay.

Summary

There is a wide range of types of labour-market flexibility, many of which can have a major impact on families. Labour-market flexibility appears to be driven primarily by the need of employers to become more competitive internationally. At times, this now means that many employees are under more pressure to work longer hours, or non-standard periods of work, creating potential conflicts between paid work and family responsibilities. However, there are also examples of employee-driven flexibilities which lead to a better balance between paid work and family life.

The international research reviewed in this section shows how inequalities have been inherent between full-time and part-time work. These inequalities are linked to gender, as it is mainly women, particularly those with young children, who work part time. In addition, throughout the OECD there has been recent growth in male part-time work, although it is not so clearly linked to the need or wish to care for children. Recent studies suggest there is a need to reconceptualise part-time work.

Homeworking, and its more recent high-technology version of teleworking, has the potential to provide ways of balancing paid work and family responsibilities, but does not remove the need for out-of-home childcare. However, new information and communication technologies also appear to have the potential to expand people's hours of paid work further, and to intrude into family life.

Finally, the emerging concept of family-friendly work places has the potential to assist employees to balance paid work and family responsibilities more effectively. Although some research indicates there may be productivity gains for employers introducing such programmes, the links are still not clear.

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CHAPTER 6

PARENTS' VOICES:

Case Studies of Families' Employment and Childcare Arrangements

Valerie N. Podmore and Theresa Sawicka

This chapter describes parents' experiences of using the early childhood education and care services, of working in flexible ways, and of using parental leave. It also explores the meanings and interlinkages of aspects of work, early childhood care and education, and parental roles. These experiences, and related meanings and attitudes, are documented by means of case-study descriptions of families.

Background to the Study

The research presented in this chapter is an extension of the study *Employment and Childcare Arrangements Among Families* (Podmore, 1994), which investigated parents' experiences and their views on labour-force participation and childcare arrangements. That research focused on early childhood care and education arrangements, organisation of employment, and parental-leave policies. Participants were 60 families with 5-year-old children, selected randomly from 14 schools in the lower North Island. In total, 101 people (59 women and 42 men) were interviewed. The families included: 41 families with 2 parents, where both the mother and the father were interviewed; 7 mother-only families and 1 father-only family; 1 family where the grandmother was the sole caregiver; and 10 families with 2 parents where only the mother was available for an interview. An in-depth interview about past and present employment and childcare arrangements was conducted with each consenting parent.

All of the 101 parents participated in an in-depth interview, which took place at a time and venue they themselves selected. The interview included sections on the child's education and care experiences during each of the first 5 years of life and after starting school, the arrangements made for helping with homework and for care before and after school, at times of illness, and during the major school holidays; the parent's experiences of paid employment or seeking work, of study, and of voluntary work during each of the child's first 5 years; and the parent's experiences of and views on parental leave. Questions were developed to investigate the patterns of experiences of the participants over time. In the course of the interview, each participant described in detail their patterns of employment and use of early childhood education services year-by-year from their child's birth to the first months at school.

The research shows there was a high incidence of participation in the early childhood education and care services. Playgroups were attended most often when the children were aged under 1 year; playcentres and childcare centres were used more often when the children were aged over 1 or 2 years; and among 4-year-olds, kindergartens were the type of service most frequently used. Concurrent use of more than one early childhood service was relatively widespread.

The benefits of early childhood care and education for parents and children usually concerned socialising and socialisation, and creative and learning activities were further benefits for the children. Difficulties concerned aspects of socialising, travel or transport to the early childhood centre, and fees or financial considerations.

Another finding was that caring for the children before they started school was primarily the responsibility of the mothers; only a few fathers had this responsibility. In general the parents chose kin as informal caregivers, and this meant that grandparents were most frequently involved in the informal care arrangements. Mothers were the people most likely to be responsible for caring for their children when they were sick, before school, after school, and in the holidays. Within the 2-parent families, reading and learning activities at home were more likely to be a shared responsibility. Most parents thought that reading at home was working out fairly well, and spontaneously made positive comments on their children's motivation or progress. Mothers were more likely to talk about the child's motivation. Time pressures were a problem for some parents who found it difficult in the evenings to co-ordinate their long hours of paid work with their children's reading activities.

In *Employment and Childcare Arrangements Among Families*, 67 percent of the women and 98 percent of the men interviewed had participated in paid work at some stage during the child's first 5 years of life. The percentage of mothers working full time increased to 19 percent by the year the children were 4 to 5 years of age. Each year from the child's birth up until school entry, over a third of the fathers were working 50 hours or more per week, and some dissatisfaction was expressed by the fathers about the hours spent in paid work. Income was seen as the main benefit of paid work. Mothers also said that interest in the work itself and having contact with adults were benefits. Difficulties for parents who had worked during the child's first 5 years were missing out on having time with their children, time pressures, fitting in household tasks, guilt, and finding appropriate childcare. Financial difficulties influenced many parents' views on mothers of young children working. Many participants thought fathers were obliged to be in paid work, but more than a third recommended more flexible roles within families.

In total, 47 parents had been studying at some stage during their child's first 5 years. University degree or diploma courses and courses at polytechnics were the types of courses most frequently undertaken. The number of parents who participated in study courses increased between the year the children were born and the year in which the children turned 5. Benefits experienced by parents who were studying included stimulation, interest, and satisfaction; developing marketable skills; and gaining more knowledge about childrearing. Difficulties encountered by parents who were studying when they had young children were tiredness or exhaustion, interruptions, time pressures, and financial needs. There was widespread involvement in voluntary work at early childhood centres, schools, in the community, at churches, sports clubs, and at Plunket and local parent-support groups.

The study also reports a relatively low uptake of parental leave among mothers and fathers who were in the paid work force the year the children were born, and many who were in casual work were not eligible. Only 8 of the mothers took more than 1 month of leave, and only 3 mothers had any paid leave. Fathers tended to take from 2 days' up to 2 weeks' leave around the time of the birth. Only 1 father took more than 2 weeks of parental leave, only a few fathers remembered having paid parental leave, and 9 said they used their annual leave. Although some mothers were satisfied, many were dissatisfied about the amount of parental leave they had around the time of the birth.

Parents participating in *Employment and Childcare Arrangements Among Families* had a range of different recommendations on leave provisions for mothers and for fathers. Many expected that mothers should be entitled to 1 year of leave, or "the law as it is". Fathers were expected to have a few weeks of paid leave readily available to support the mother around the time of the birth. The importance of maintaining contact with the workplace while on parental leave was emphasised. Parents expressed concern about the need for flexibility among employers and in the workplace, and about having domestic leave available for parents when their children are ill. The difficulties of employers in small businesses were pointed out in regard to parental-leave policies.

The main themes evident in *Employment and Childcare Arrangements Among Families* are:

- diversity and change in families' work and childcare arrangements,
- access to early childhood education and care,
- the need for flexibility in workplaces,
- the impact of long hours of paid work on families,
- financial constraints on taking up parental leave,
- gender roles.

The research report *Employment and Childcare Arrangements Among Families,* and a summary report prepared for the participating schools and families, were completed in July 1994.

Case Studies of Families' Employment and Childcare

Theoretical Framework

The interview used in the study *Employment and Childcare Arrangements Among Families* (Podmore, 1994) was designed with the intention of developing further in-depth analysis at the case-study level. The interview questions were constructed as a basis from which to explore in some detail the participants' perceptions and the meanings of their experiences, and to connect these to wider social conditions and contexts. Yin (1989) describes interviews as "one of the most important sources of case study information" (p. 88).

Some of the main themes identified in *Employment and Childcare Arrangements Among Families* are investigated further in the case studies, which describe the meanings of aspects of work and education to families with young children. It was planned that where appropriate, a phenomenological perspective would be applied to flesh out and describe what the experiences during the first 5 years of a child's life meant to the case-study families (Giorgi, 1986; Svensson, 1986). This required the researchers to be experientially receptive and non-judgmental, suspending biases during the interview phase and when reading and analysing the transcripts for main themes or meanings (Giorgi, 1986; Hoshmand, 1989; Silvers, 1982). At the commencement of the case-study phase, an updated literature search on phenomenological approaches to research interviews was carried out to investigate further work on analysing case-study material and to explore revisionist work on phenomenological research.

One of the techniques used by phenomenological researchers to suspend biases is "bracketing". Several researchers, including Hauser, have described their efforts to "bracket" the impulse to put the interviewee's descriptions into their own terms, and to "attend very carefully to the experience as lived by the participants" (Hauser, 1992, p. 8).

Svensson (1986), a Swedish researcher, differentiates 3 approaches to phenomenological research: "scientific" (S) which is interpretative-analytic; "philosophical" (P) which is interpretative-transformational and includes Giorgi's work; and "language" (L) which is interpretative-aggregative. The S approach emphasises the conceptions of the phenomena; the P approach focuses mainly on finding the essence (or the fundamental meaning) of an individual phenomenon according to the participants' descriptions; and the L approach emphasises describing and combining verbal data. According to Svensson, the P approach involves 4 or 5 steps in the analysis: the first is an exploration of the whole description by reading it repeatedly, the second step involves reading through the text to distinguish "meaning units", and as a third step each meaning unit is transformed "from a description close to the subject's language to a description using general psychological categories" (p.37). The reduction of data can be achieved firstly by reducing the everyday-language content, used to describe an experience, to its corresponding psychological meaning;

and then secondly by "reducing the extensiveness of the description by means of a description of the whole of the transformed meaning units" (p.43).

Hoshmand (1989) also describes specific steps in phenomenological analyses. The transcripts are read and reread. They are searched for meanings and main themes. Questions are developed about the situated structure of the described experience: What reveals this person's experience? What themes occur for all participants? What is important about and underlies these personal meanings? According to Hoshmand, "The increasing willingness of phenomenological researchers to explain their method of access and interpretation and to present actual samples of the original descriptive data for review, makes it possible for the scientific community to evaluate the methodology of this alternative research paradigm" (pp. 29-30).

Kunkel and Williams (1991) use 4 analytical steps based on Giorgi's phenomenological method. Their approach may be more prescriptive than the approaches used by some researchers who place more emphasis on reporting the narrated descriptions of experiences themselves. The 4 steps mean that:

1. The transcribed narrative/interview protocol is read and reread by the investigators, to search for meanings.
2. The transcripts are reviewed to identify themes and "meaning units", which are " a product of the researcher's psychological perspective on the phenomena of interest" (Kunkel & Williams, 1991, p. 317).
3. The researcher evaluates the meaning units to express their psychological significance more clearly, searching for connections in ways in which respondents view the phenomenon.
4. Each meaning unit is stated concisely to reflect the interviewee's experience, integrating the personal meaning and social context for the research participants.

Using this method, Kunkel and Williams (1991) analysed young and elderly participants' perspectives on counselling, and transformed the participants' descriptions of counselling into 3 dichotomous meaning units: "guardedness versus openness", "self-reliance/God reliance versus networking", and "extreme problems/extreme remedies versus normalcy" (pp. 318-319).

Attinasi (1991) describes 6 steps in phenomenological interviewing. The purpose of the additional steps is to give the participants the interpretations of the first interview, and to extend the description and interpretation into action. Attinasi pointed out that every study would not include all the phases, and the phases themselves were not strictly chronologically or logically ordered.

Researchers like Davis (1991) have distinguished carefully between phenomenology and ethnography, emphasising their differences. However, within phenomenology, a variety of approaches may be used to analyse case-study data, depending on the type of study and the research questions. As Cashman and McCraw (1993) state:

> Both ethnography and phenomenological research are interpretive and descriptive forms of research. The ethnographic investigation focuses on the social organization of a group to examine the cultural processes and perspectives of those within the culture. Meaning assigned to experience and behavior in a culture results from a complex mixture of objects, situations, and events. Phenomenological researchers believe that there are multiple ways of interpreting events for each person and that these interpretations are what constitute reality for each person . . . (p. 1)

Cashman and McCraw have also pointed out that case studies may be prepared for different purposes and written at different levels, depending on the research questions.

Other related research from Sweden shows an emphasis on phenomenography (Kihlström, 1994; Pramling & Lindahl, 1994). Phenomenographic studies similarly emphasise that phenomena have different meanings or conceptions for different people, and to some extent they use the phenomenological concepts of "life world" and "lived experience". As in the S (scientific/interpretative) approach to phenomenology, there is considerable emphasis on analysing the participants' conceptions. Recent studies from Sweden and Australia show that phenomenography is appropriate in educational research because this approach produces in-depth descriptions and interpretations of conceptions of learning and teaching (e.g., Pramling & Lindahl, 1994; Prosser, Trigwell, & Taylor, 1994).

Research Questions

The parents' concerns about their own and their children's experiences provide case-study-level illustrations of the impact of present social conditions on families. Following Cashman and McGraw (1993), in these case studies the researchers have taken as their starting point the reality perceived and experienced by each parent. The implications of their experiences for social policy emerge as part of the case studies. Drawing on the experiences within families from a range of cultures, these questions are addressed:

1. How does children's participation in different early childhood education and care services link to changes over time in their parents' participation in paid work and other experiences? How do parents describe the meanings of these changes for children and parents?
2. How do flexible ways of working occur over time within families with young children? What is the impact on families of these flexible ways of working?
3. How do parents perceive and experience parental leave?
4. How do parents describe their experiences of paid work, study, or seeking paid work?

Method

The report *Employment and Childcare Arrangements Among Families* describes the overall patterns found, and includes some comments from participants. Various patterns of work were evident within families. Types of employment patterns within the 2-parent families included, for example: father working full time, mother part time; mother working full time, father part time; father working full time, mother not in paid work; father and/or mother seeking employment. These patterns were not fixed; within families they changed over time during the first 5 years of the child's life. Similarly, the patterns of use of the early childhood education and care services were complex, and often involved multiple arrangements which changed during the course of the child's first 5 years.

The case studies are intended to illustrate the complexities of families' employment patterns and their use of the early childhood education and care services, and to provide useful in-depth information about the participants' views and experiences of parental leave around the birth of a child and when children are ill.

Participants

Families were selected from the larger data set using a stratified procedure to ensure that different types and patterns of work participation/employment seeking, different parental-leave experiences, and different ethnic groups, were represented. Variables and categories included in the selection were:

- family configuration,
- ethnic self-identification,
- patterns of mother's and father's paid work,

- parental leave uptake,
- early childhood education and care experience.

Family Configuration and Ethnicity

The case studies include 7 families with 2 parents, where it is possible to match paternal and maternal interview data and describe the experiences within 2-parent families. In addition, 1 family where only the mother was available for an interview, and 2 mother-only and 1 father-only family are included. There are 6 Pakeha families, 3 families where both or 1 parent identified as Maori, 1 Samoan family, and 1 Chinese family.

Patterns of Paid Work

Patterns of paid work current at the time of the interviews (when the child was aged 5 years) include: father in full-time paid work, mother part time (3 families); father and mother in full-time paid work (2 families); mother-only family at the time of the interview, not in the paid work force (1 family); mother in full-time paid work, father in part-time work (1 family); mother working full time, father's employment status unknown (1 family); father and/or mother seeking employment (1 family); father-only family, father in full-time paid work (1 family); and mother-only family, mother in full-time paid work (1 family). These patterns were not necessarily stable. For many families, the patterns of paid work changed over time.

Parental Leave

Categories of uptake of parental leave include: more than 1 year (1 mother); 1 year (1 mother); 6 months for each parent (1 couple); and 1 month (1 mother). Also included are: 1 parent who was self-employed at the time of the birth, and mothers and fathers who either chose not to take parental leave, or who did not have parental leave available to them.

Early Childhood Education and Care

Across the 11 families, all of the major types of early childhood care and education services, and sequential and concurrent use of multiple services, are represented.

Selection and Size of Sample

Within the sample groups stratified by ethnic identity and by types and patterns of working, selection of families for the in-depth case studies was expected to be random. However, consideration was also given to the need for the researchers to be close to the lived experience described by the participants and to have an established rapport with them. Therefore, where possible within the stratified groups, families were selected who had been interviewed by the 2 researchers working on the case studies. Earlier phenomenological studies tended to include between 10 and 15 participants, although sometimes researchers worked with "only 6 or as many as 25 people" (Tesch, 1984). Several more recent in-depth studies have focused intensively on 2 participants (e.g., Hauser, 1992). In the present study it was expected that 10 to 12 families would provide an entirely adequate source of in-depth data, and this was judged an appropriate maximum number of participants. Families with contrasting patterns of work and parental-leave experiences were selected in consultation with co-researchers.

Procedures

Consent and responsive feedback procedures were an important component. Preliminary letters were sent to 12 families. The interview transcripts were then prepared and refined so that the participants could review them for appraisal and approval. Every endeavour was made to remove all identifying features from the interview transcripts. The participants were given the opportunity to correct the information in the transcript to make it more accurate, up to date, and complete, or to cross out parts they wanted omitted. Of the 12 families we approached, 11 families (18 parents) gave their written consent to continue participating in the study. The participating parents corrected their interview transcripts in several ways, according to their own preferences: either in writing and by mail, or during a personal visit from the researcher. Updating of the information also took place during telephone interviews and conversations, in writing, or during a personal visit.

In this research the case studies tend to draw on, but are not modelled prescriptively on, aspects of a philosophical (P) approach to phenomenology. The researchers also draw on their respective disciplines of developmental psychology and social anthropology when looking at categories of meaning and at sociocultural contexts. Some intentions of the case-study approach used are:

- to derive units and/or categories of meaning;
- to examine and document the connections between each of the research questions and the themes and units of meaning;
- to describe the families' lived experiences. This is the main focus.

Rudduck (1993), in a discussion of aspects of qualitative research, describes using direct quotations from transcriptions of tape-recorded interviews as the way to "capture succinctly and vividly what could only be expressed dully and less economically in the researcher's own words" (p. 19). In this research, it was anticipated that the families' lived experiences would be described most clearly by quoting verbatim excerpts in the parents' own voices.

The interview transcripts were approved, corrected, or updated by the participants and in consultation with them. The researchers then reread all of the transcripts, and identified units of meaning. The researchers described meanings at two levels: the personal meanings for the participants, and meanings at the contextual level, including the wider social conditions. As a cross-check on their interpretations, both researchers aimed to analyse at least half of the transcripts independently. In total, they analysed 8 of the 11 families' transcripts separately and independently to ensure they continued to agree on the categories of meaning they identified. The themes and units of meaning coded on the transcripts are summarised in the appendix to this chapter.

Within each family/case, actual life-event descriptions are related to 1 or more of the main themes and to the 4 research questions stated earlier in this chapter. A draft of the case studies was prepared and sent to the participating families for appraisal/approval prior to publishing this report. This chapter describes the participants' experiences in relation to the 4 research questions, identifies the interlinkages between the research questions and the units of meaning, and integrates information about personal meanings and the social contexts in which the participants' experiences occurred.

Case Study Findings

Case Study Families

The 11 families who agreed to take part in this case study research are:

1. A Chinese family, where the mother participated in full-time paid work after the child turned 1 year of age. On average, the mother and father worked more than 50 hours per week. The father was in full-time paid work throughout the child's first 5 years. Both parents are self-employed in the same small business.

The child has 3 other siblings, and is the third-born of the 4 children in the family. She attended kindergarten from age 3 to 5 years.

2. A Pakeha/New Zealand European family where the mother is in full-time paid work. The father, who is the main caregiver, participates in part-time paid work. The child attended kindergarten from 3 to 4 years of age, and kindergarten then an independent school from 4 to 5 years. She is the second-born of 2 children. The mother did not have any parental leave because she was in part-time casual work the year of the child's birth.

3. A Pakeha/New Zealand European family, where the mother participated in part-time casual work when the child was aged 1 to 5 years. From the child's fourth birthday, she worked around 14 hours per week. From the child's birth, the father was in full-time paid work, for over 60 hours per week on average. The child attended a playgroup overseas from age 1 to 2 years, an overseas playgroup and private kindergarten (concurrently) from 2 to 3 years, a private kindergarten and private preschool (sequentially) from 3 to 4 years, and a private preschool from 4 to 5 years. She is the second-born of 2 children. Neither parent took parental leave at the time of her birth. The mother chose to resign, and the father chose not to take leave because of his commitment to his job.

4. A European, father-only family, where the father worked 30 to 35 hours per week each year after the child turned 2 years of age. The father has had custody of the child since he was just over 2 years of age. The child attended a childcare centre from 1 to 3 years of age, and childcare and kindergarten (concurrently) from 3 to 5 years. He is the fourth-born of 4 children. The father, who was self-employed at the time the child was born, took a week off around the time of the birth.

5. A mother-only family where the mother, a Pakeha, participated in full-time paid work after her child turned 1 year of age. The mother's hours of paid work average over 50 hours per week. She had several changes in work patterns, including a brief redundancy when the child was aged 3 to 4 years. The child attended playcentre from 1 to 5 years, and also had a nanny from 0 to 2 years and another nanny from 3 to 5 years. He is the second-born child in a 2-child family. The mother worked in the public service during the year of the child's birth, and took 1 year of parental leave.

6. A Maori family, where the mother was not in paid work during the child's first 5 years. She participated in casual part-time work after the child turned 5 years, and then moved into full-time study. The father was in paid work during the child's first 3 years, then spent some time seeking work. He resumed paid work, but was made redundant a second time, then participated in voluntary work. The year after the child turned 5 years he began a study course. The child attended a kohanga reo from birth to 1 year, a playgroup and a kohanga reo (concurrently) from 1 to 2 years, a kohanga between 2 and 4 years, and then moved from the kohanga reo to a state school between 4 and 5 years. She is the first-born of 3 children. The father had 1 day of parental leave, when his wife went into labour. The mother, who did not have any parental leave, chose to resign when she was pregnant.

7. A family where the mother, who identifies as Maori, was the only adult in the household both years we interviewed and visited her. The mother was not in paid work during the child's first 6 years. The child attended a childcare centre from age 2 to 3 years, and a kohanga reo from 3 to 5 years. She is the second-born of 3 children. The mother was not eligible for parental leave; she was not in the work force the year of the child's birth.

8. A Samoan family, where the mother was the only parent available for interviews. The mother, who did shift work, was in full-time paid work when the child was aged 1 month to 1 year, part-time paid work (averaging 22 hours per week) from 1 to 4 years, and full-time paid work from 4 to 6 years. The child attended a Samoan language group and a kindergarten between the ages of 4 and 5 years (concurrently). He is the third-born of 4 children. The mother was permitted up to 1 year of unpaid parental leave but, for financial reasons, returned to work after 1 month.

9. A Pakeha/New Zealand European family, where the mother works part time and the father works full time. The mother participated in permanent part-time paid work when the child was aged 1 to 4 years. The father participated in full-time paid work throughout the child's first 5 years. The child attended a playgroup and then family daycare from birth to 1 year (sequentially), family daycare arrangements from 1 to 3 years, a playcentre and a kindergarten (sequentially) between 3 and 4 years, and a kindergarten between 4 and 5 years. He is the first-born of 2 children. The mother, who worked in the private sector, took 1 year of parental leave.

10. A family where the father identifies as Maori, and the mother as Pakeha. The mother was in part-time paid work after the child turned 2 years, with hours ranging from 12 to 30 per week. The father was in full-time work throughout the child's first 5 years. The child attended a playcentre from birth to 1 year, a playgroup from 1 to 3 years, a playcentre and a childcare centre (concurrently) from 3 to 4 years, and a playcentre from 4 to 5 years. He is the second-born of 3 children. The mother had no parental leave, and she chose to resign. The father had 2 weeks' paid leave.

11. A Pakeha/New Zealand European family where both parents usually work full time. The child attended a playgroup from 1 to 3 years, and a playgroup and kindergarten from 3 to 5 years. The child also had a caregiver from 1 to 4 years, and a nanny from 4 to 6 years. He is the second-born of 2 children. His parents shared their parental leave: the mother took the first 6 months after the child's birth and the father took parental leave when the child was aged 6 to 12 months.

Diversity and Change in Early Childhood Education

One issue investigated through the case studies is the families' diverse and changing use of the early childhood education and care services, and the meanings underlying such changes. These research questions are addressed:

> *How does children's participation in different early childhood education and care services link to changes over time in their parents' participation in paid work and other experiences? How do parents describe the meanings of these changes for children and parents?*

Several themes and meanings linked the children's diverse and changing early childhood education experiences with changes in their parents' paid work or study. The parents' experiences of these changes highlighted several concerns: access and transport, financial accessibility of early childhood services, perceptions of the child's development, gender issues (and solo parenthood), language maintenance, and immigrant needs.

Access and Transport

There appears to be a link between changes in early childhood education and work participation, and access or transport to the early childhood centres. Transport and travel were important considerations for some parents when they changed their childcare arrangements and work.

Family 2

This was evident when we asked one family about the informal childcare arrangements they used before their child started school. During the child's first months of life, the mother sustained an injury, and consequently the children were in full-time care for 6 weeks. The father described this as an arrangement "that was done through someone we knew through Barnardo's - but it was informal. We took them to the house." This was "all right", although travelling to the caregiver was a difficulty at times, because "there was always one (of the 2 children) asleep, and we had to take them to the house".

At 3 years of age the child started kindergarten. When asked about the benefits of this arrangements for the parents, her father replied:

> It was all right - yeah - it worked in quite well at that time, dropping her off and picking up the other [one child was at morning school - the other at afternoon kindergarten]. It was only just down the road so it was good.

The next change of early childhood arrangements occurred at 4 years 6 months when the child moved from a kindergarten to an independent school. This change also raised the question of access and transport. Again, the parents' emphasis was on co-ordinating the arrangements for their 2 children. For the father, this change meant: "that worked well because (both children) were there together. . . . The car pool works out quite well really."

From the mother's perspective, the child's early childhood experiences were clearly linked to participation in paid work, and flexible roles within the family. She described her child's move into kindergarten this way: "Well I didn't have much to do with it. I was at work. Although I've always had a day off work if the children have got something special on or something like that."

The father's description of the benefits of the early childhood arrangements for his daughter suggests that interaction with her sibling and peers was important. The child was happy moving into kindergarten because she made friends there, and she was pleased about moving from kindergarten to an independent school because this meant joining her sister there. Over all however, the meaning of the changes in early childhood arrangements for the father in this family meant co-ordinating transport for 2 children, and fitting in some part-time work with the children's educational arrangements.

Family 3

Another family used complex and changing early childhood education and care arrangements. The child attended a playgroup overseas from age 1 to 2 years, an overseas playgroup and private kindergarten (concurrently) from 2 to 3 years, a private kindergarten and private preschool (sequentially) from 3 to 4 years, and a private preschool from 4 to 5 years. The father, who worked on average more than 60 hours per week during this period, said that he could recall no difficulties with the various arrangements.

In contrast, however, the mother described travel and access as a major difficulty with both the formal and the informal care arrangements she made during the child's early years in New Zealand. These arrangements allowed her to continue part-time paid work, but her comments about the difficulties she experienced included: "it was just the travel" and "travelling was a pain". Travel seldom deterred parents from participating in paid work, but travel to early childhood centres and other childcare arrangements caused fatigue and stress related to demands on parents' time.

Financial Constraints and Early Childhood Education and Care

Another difficulty with access to early childhood education concerned fees and financial constraints. One father put it this way: "childcare fees are outrageous - employers should come to the party and help subsidise them". This was one reason why some parents changed or combined their arrangements.

Family 10

One family found it feasible to use a creche because the mother was not required to pay fees. The child attended a playcentre from birth to 1 year, a playgroup from 1 to 3 years, a playcentre and a childcare centre (concurrently) from 3 to 4 years, and a playcentre from 4 to 5 years. The mother, who was employed for 15 to 30 hours per week at a childcare centre when her child was aged 3 to 4 years, described in some detail the connections between her work and study and the childcare arrangements. She said that during the child's third year:

> There was a time that he was coming to work with me because I'm an early childhood worker. He was allowed to come to the creche that I was working at, while I worked he was cared for in the creche system so that was lucky. I was able to work and my child received early childhood care. He was also attending a playcentre - while I was working I was given half a day off a week to attend playcentre with him, so that I could also continue my training as well as working.

There were no difficulties with this arrangement, which permitted the family to have the child at the creche without paying fees. The mother described it this way:

> I think if I had been elsewhere and not in the creche that I was in I wouldn't have worked it. There was no way he would have been able to come with me free of charge, as well as training in early childhood and get paid for it. I was working, I was putting my training into use and getting paid for it. That was the biggest benefit. Extra income.

There were also benefits for the child:

> He got the best of both worlds he's still got mum as well as care in an early childhood centre. I think he got extra. We've always attended playcentre, I attended playcentre with my oldest - so he got both. He still had contact with his friends right up until he went to school as well as creche. It was fine, I think.

The parents in our sample used a range of early childhood services, some with high costs in terms of fees (for example, employing a nanny), and others with high costs in terms of parental time and involvement (for example, attending a playcentre).

Family 5

This child attended playcentre from 1 to 5 years, and also had a nanny from 0 to 2 years and another nanny from 3 to 5 years. His mother found that having a nanny provided helpful support and stability after the child lost his father. The mother was a relatively well-paid professional who worked on average over 50 hours per week. However, she described having a nanny as a costly arrangement: "It's been excellent but it's enormously costly though . . . My hourly rate after tax and after childcare is $8.00 an hour because all the childcare comes out of your post-tax income. So, it's hugely costly."

This combination of arrangements facilitated the mother's participation in long hours of paid work. If parents have a demanding work role in terms of time, they may see a private arrangement such as a nanny as expensive, but also as the least stressful option currently available. Other options may include restructuring workplace practices to reduce the hours of work demanded in some positions, and extending the hours that early childhood centres are open.

Perceptions of Child Development

Parents' perceptions of the child's development clearly underlay the connections between changes in early childhood education and their own patterns of participation in work or study. Parents sometimes focused almost entirely on their understanding of their own child's development when they described changes they made in early childhood education and care arrangements. The interview material shows that, once parents made the decision to leave their child to be cared for by others during the early years, they wanted the child to be secure at first, and more independent or autonomous at a later stage. They also wanted adequate cognitive, language, and social stimulation for their children. Parents' satisfaction and stress levels at work are likely to be related to the extent to which they are satisfied about whether their children's developmental needs are being met.

Family 9

This family used a range of early childhood services, and the parents talked about the issue of meeting both the child's emotional needs and their own need to participate in paid work. During the first months of the child's life, his mother was on parental leave. Occasionally she went to a playgroup with her infant, and later that year he attended the playgroup with a caregiver. When the mother resumed paid work, she organised a family daycare arrangement for her child. She decided that family daycare had the potential to offer greater stability than a creche, but she sometimes found the back-up system of the family daycare arrangement was insufficiently reliable to meet her own need to be a regular participant in the paid work force.

The mother described her initial choice of the family daycare arrangement this way:

> When we first looked at doing something with [the child] for going back to work or whatever we actually looked at a creche - I won't tell you which one - and we weren't very impressed. So we only looked at one but we said 'That's not for us, he's got to go to somebody's home.' And the more I thought about it the more I realised it would be more stable for the child to go to another home environment. That's basically where the decision came from and that was the good side of it - obviously you go back to work and you get the money - that's the good side of it.

In effect, this meant that she wanted a stable arrangement which met her child's emotional need for security. Although the child "came right" later on, she described difficulties in meeting his socioemotional needs. Settling in was difficult: "He was close to 1 year when I first put him in [family] day care. It was only 3 days a week, and it wasn't full days either, but settling [in]. He didn't take very well to leaving Mum. It took a good solid 2 to 3 weeks to settle in."

She herself experienced some difficulties with this arrangement: "If ever the caregiver for some reason was sick or couldn't look after the child, although Barnardo's is supposed to have back ups, I never ended up with any back up, so I used to have to take days off work, which was just a bit - touchy."

From the age of 1 to 2 years, the child continued with family daycare, but he stopped attending the playgroup. His mother said: "We changed caregivers, and the new caregiver did not take him to playgroup. Also my position changed, which meant I worked 4 days per week, so I couldn't take him to playgroup either." The benefits of the family daycare arrangement experienced by the mother at this stage were "paid work and mental stimulation". However, both parents described some difficulties with the arrangements, and the mother talked about these in relation to her child's developmental stage and differences in childrearing practices:

> We changed caregivers and we started running into trouble here. [The child] was an early developer and he started coming into his terrible 2s and the [caregiver] couldn't handle that. And a few other bits and pieces - [the caregiver] had a 3-year-old - he was ganging up on [the child] a bit. And it took me a while to realise all this - Not being there and seeing the situation, it's really quite hard . . . we ended up with a bit of a horrible situation. Just after he turned 2 we had to take him out of there. One day I went to work, but I had to come straight home from work to the caregiver's and took him out. At this point I had to take a week off work while we organised a new caregiver. Not a good situation for my employer as I obviously could give no prior warning.

The mother described the benefits of the family daycare arrangement for the child at this stage as "a steady home-type environment" and having "another child to play with". Again, the difficulties related to meeting the child's developing socioemotional needs: "That was a bit of a problem. That was that particular childcare situation, I would say [that particular caregiver]."

When aged 2 to 3 years, the child participated in both a family daycare arrangement and a playgroup. There were benefits for the family after the change of caregivers: "we then moved him to another caregiver - we still stuck with Barnardo's, and he had an absolutely lovely lady this time - no problems." The mother said that her child then experienced these benefits:

> The person that we were satisfied with [the new caregiver] was [when child was aged] from 2 to 3 years. She was absolutely lovely. As Barnardo's said to me 'You won't have any problems with this lady, she's one of our best caregivers', and she was. She was brilliant. She was one of those women who absolutely loved children, could handle any situation, was super efficient, just one of those. She used to have 4 under 4 with her - she used to take them all grocery shopping and she was really organised. Because of the other children there, it really helped him develop social skills. He didn't have children friends among our own social group. He loved it there.

At the age of 3 to 4 years, after the birth of his younger sibling, the child moved to a playcentre and later to a kindergarten. His mother described these changes this way: "As usual, there was a waiting list for kindy so I took him [the child now aged 3 years] to playcentre until a place came up at kindy." He attended playcentre twice a week from 3 to 3½ years, and then moved on to a kindergarten which he attended 3 times each week. For the mother, the good things about the kindergarten were: "I could leave him for short periods of time. It is difficult to get time just with one of them. So I found that really good for me and [the new baby]." She found that playcentre wasn't so satisfactory for herself "because of the time factor". However, she described positive developmental experiences for the child when he attended both the playcentre and the kindergarten. At playcentre these were having "good friends, and equipment - blocks and paint". She recalled that, after the move into kindergarten, the only difficulties were "separation from Mum" and "settling in," and the child experienced these benefits:

> I think it was important because he always had to have an adult that he knew around - if it wasn't me or [husband] or grandma or someone like that, he wasn't happy. It probably goes back to his early care, I would say but it was a good sort of weaning period if you like. You couldn't have a child like that suddenly start school. It was good for him in that respect. It also taught him to start his own little independence. A break away from mum - I can do things myself, I can look after myself.

When he was aged 4 years to 5 years, the child continued to attend kindergarten, and at 4 years 3 months he started morning kindergarten. The mother found the benefits of this arrangement were that her child was settled, happy, and becoming independent, and she herself had time out:

> We got to the stage where I could just walk in, he'd sit on the mat with the other kids, and I'd walk out, kind of thing. So that was more independence for him [and me]. It was more time again for me with [younger child]. She'd have a morning sleep as well which meant that I could then rush around and do the housework. It made me feel better. And [the child] was getting better social skills. I stayed with him at first [when he started morning kindy]. One day he was doing a painting and one of the older children next door to him wrote his name. He asked 'What's that?' I told him and he said 'I'm going to do that'. He came home and every day after that he would come home from kindy and ask me to teach him to write his name, which we did. He stuck at it 3 to 4 days and he could write his own name. That was one thing. I suppose it was teaching/learning experience. I don't think there is a great deal of difference between morning and afternoon kindy. It is longer - so it is a longer break away, leading into a full day and week at school. He enjoyed kindy.

Both parents' descriptions were focused fairly similarly on the child's developmental needs. There was a change over time, and a major emphasis on the child's emotional needs. Their descriptions show a concern with security and settling in during the first years of life, and with developing independence around 3 and 4 years. This focus on dependence/security and later independence/autonomy underlay many parents' descriptions of their of early childhood arrangements.

The father, who was interviewed separately and at a different venue from the mother, focused similarly on aspects of the child's development and wellbeing as he described the changes in care arrangements that took place during the first 5 years. He recalled that the child "had 3 different caregivers" through the family daycare arrangement, and he described each change in terms of whether the child's developmental needs were being met, at first in terms of feeling secure, and later in terms of being more independent and stimulated. When asked about the benefits of the family daycare arrangements for himself and the adults in the family, he made these comments:

> The first one was an arrangement that was okay for a while, but I wasn't all that happy with it, to be quite honest. That was really the person. The second one, when it started off it seemed to be going all right but then there seemed to be a bit of a problem develop. The next caregiver was absolutely brilliant. She really helped, played with him, extended him. She'd had a lot of experiences with children, including her own.

The father described the difficulties he experienced in terms of meeting the child's developing cognitive and socioemotional needs. The final comments in his description show concern that the child was insecure and his emotional needs were not being met:

> I wasn't particularly happy with that person [the first caregiver]. Whilst there was absolutely no malice or anything towards [child], I don't think it did him any great harm. It certainly didn't extend him in any way. It was straight out childcare, and that was it. [With the second caregiver] there seemed to be a bit of a problem develop which caused us a little bit of concern with [the child] because he seemed to be freaked out when he was in a room [with a closed door].

He said that the benefits of these arrangements for the child were that "the third caregiver really extended him and played with him".

At age 3 to 4 years, when the child moved into kindergarten, the father also remembered that he "took a while to settle". The benefits for the parents were: "[after a while] he settled down fairly well. After a while he went on there in leaps and bounds. He adapted to it and made new friends, which was good."

These descriptions were concerned predominantly with the child's developmental needs. They move from concern about the infant's security, and the young child's settling into the early childhood education and care arrangements, to an emphasis on the 4-year-old child's independent social relationships. The father recalled some difficulties when the child was 4 years of age, which focused on aspects of stimulation in the early childhood centre. He described the child's experience of kindergarten, at age 4 years, this way:

> He got bored towards the end because all his mates went on to morning kindy and he got left behind. There was the age factor of moving from afternoon. It was quite high - about 4 years 3 months before he went to morning kindy. Changed kindy then - bored out of his mind for the last 3 months when his friends went to school. But he started having school visits which helped. But he was well and truly ready for school but it was a bit unfortunate because his birthday fell in the holidays. So when he did turn 5 he had to wait another couple of weeks.

Other families who had experienced fewer changes in the early childhood arrangements, and in the mothers' paid-work patterns, similarly recounted difficulties with their 4½-year-olds becoming restless.

Other Families

Parents using a range of early childhood services, including kindergarten, playcentre, and a kohanga reo, focused on this problem as they described their own experiences and their perceptions of their child's cognitive, language, and social development. Parents whose child attended playcentre when aged 4½ years described the child's experience at 4 years as being ready for change. The father put it this way:

> There were big changes. He was getting a bit too old for it. He'd been there since he was [aged] 1 [year] and he was getting sick of it. He just couldn't wait to get to school and we couldn't wait for him to get to school either. He was a bit irritable because he wanted to go to school. He was ready for school.

The mother made these comments about the good things the child experienced as a 4-year-old at playcentre: "He was able to spend right till 5 at playcentre; he didn't have to change to a kindy or anything like that or creches or anything." When asked about what did not work out so well for the child she said:

> Possibly, a lot of his friends left early, because he'd started at [age] nought. He was always involved in an older group of the children. Well the group of children that he was involved with left for school a good year earlier than him. He was always ahead. The last 6 months he was at playcentre we found it very hard to enjoy it a lot because his friends had gone off to school and he was in limbo for a while. That's probably the hardest for him. He would have been ready to move on at the same time that his friends did. That's the disadvantage.

This description focused mainly on the child's social stimulation.

Another family using a kohanga reo described their child's need for greater language stimulation at age 4 years. The child's mother said "She became bored and she wasn't happy." She elaborated:

> She became really bored. She needed to be stimulated more because she had been at the kohanga so long - from birth. It was a long time but I didn't find that out until she turned 3. If I had known I would have started her at 3 then she would have been still wanting to learn, still had that enthusiastic edge but she lost it at 4. She became bored. She understood all the basics, she could talk back in short sentences and the other children couldn't. She became bored. She needed more. She needed a step up with other children who could talk back to her. She just became really bored but because at that time we were looking for the next step where to put her. Actually we had been looking since she started. We've actually found the bilingual Maori class and asked the teacher if she could come in, in the afternoon. She said 'That's fine' and [child's name] became stabilised. She was back in there wanting to learn. She was all excited again.

In addition to this emphasis on Maori language learning, the father remembered that when the child attended the kohanga as a 4-year-old with a younger sibling, "he [her young brother] was her baby. She was very protective".

Family 11

This is a another family where the mother focused on her child's socioemotional development as she described the changes that took place in childcare arrangements and work-force participation. Both parents resumed full-time paid work when their child was aged 1 year. The child had a caregiver from the age of 1 year, and he also attended a playgroup with the caregiver. His mother, who described this as a "pop-in" group, thought that, during the first year of that arrangement, the caregiver experienced the main benefits: "I think she actually enjoyed the interaction with the other adults as well." When asked what were the benefits of these arrangements for the child, his mother replied that "he really enjoyed it, although he wasn't a sociable child. He was quite contented with his own company." She continued, "I think the arrangement was more for the woman who looked after him. I think those groups with the really small children are more for the adults than the children."

When he was aged 2 to 3 years, the child continued to go to the playgroup based at the local church. He went twice a week that year, accompanied by his caregiver and another child in her care. Once again, the child's mother thought the primary purpose was for the caregiver to have adult company. However, she also described benefits for the child's social development:

> I think it was good for the children because the children - there were the 2 of them the same age and they were getting very dependent on each other, so it was good for them to learn things like sharing and being sociable. To learn those social skills when they didn't have each other. Because they spent every day together and most of the day together the two of them became quite adept at communicating without talking, and they still do. One's a little girl and one's a little boy.

His mother also said there were no difficulties for the child at that stage. At age 3 to 4 years, he remained with the same caregiver each weekday, and he attended the playgroup and also a kindergarten. This combined arrangement meant that each week he was at kindergarten 3 afternoons, and at the playgroup 2 mornings. The child's mother described the benefits she experienced with this arrangement in terms of the child's developing independence. This was important to her as a mother in full-time employment:

> I think one of the good things [about kindergarten] for me as his mother and probably not the primary caregiver in the daytime - one of the things is that he

> became more independent. I think one of the drawbacks of being a working mother, especially of small children, is that you quite often do more for them for ease of your life. I still fall into that trap of thinking he isn't capable of doing things he can do and I think being in kindergarten where [the caregiver] or I weren't there, it was actually good for him.

When discussing the benefits of these arrangements for the child, she spoke mainly about identity, independence, and autonomy:

> In kindergarten where [caregiver] or I weren't there, it was actually really good for him to be himself, rather than my son or the child that [caregiver] looked after. It gave him a role where he was the primary focus rather than me or [caregiver]. The good thing for him I think was he really enjoyed the activities.

However, his mother thought that when he was involved in these complex, combined arrangements, the child did have some difficulties with physical needs like sleep, and with socialisation:

> He couldn't cope at first with the 5 activities a week [playgroup 2 mornings, kindergarten 3 afternoons]. And it got to the stage where we'd go to pick him up [at around 6.15 p.m.] and he'd be asleep because he'd had such a busy day. So we asked that he have only one activity a day until he got a bit older and better able to cope with it. I think it was hard for him to learn to be 1 of a group instead of 1 of 2 - the baby in the family. He had to learn - about finding their place in the world, and I think that comes as a shock when you're little and everything's revolved around you for a while.

When he was 4 to 5 years of age, the child attended the same playgroup and kindergarten, and during that year a nanny cared for him in his home. For the first half of that period he was at afternoon kindergarten for 3 days each week, and at the playgroup twice a week. In the second half of that year, he attended kindergarten 5 mornings a week, and was in the care of his nanny 5 afternoons a week. His mother described her experience with the nanny this way: "the main change was the new nanny"; she was "excellent". The mother felt the main benefit was that the child's social and emotional needs were being met:

> [The Nanny] is nearly 30 years younger than [the caregiver] that we had previously and the whole way she deals with him is quite different - the focus is quite different and life's just a ball for him at the moment. He's really happy.

The father also mentioned the child's socioemotional needs when he described the changing early childhood education and care arrangements. When the child attended the playgroup from the age of 2 to 3 years, his father described the benefits of this arrangement for the child as "contact with other children". He remembered the child's kindergarten experience at age 4 years this way: "It's a bit of a blur really - great. He loved it."

However, when the father discussed his experiences of the child's participating in the playgroup and at kindergarten, his own experience of difference was dominant. When he described the child's changing education and care arrangements and his movements in and out of the paid work force, the main difficulties for the father were related to gender issues.

Gender and Roles within the Family

Family 11

The father mentioned that, when the child was aged 2 to 3 years, they attended the playgroup together for a few months. The main difficulties for the father with these changed arrangements, as a househusband on parental leave, were: "It wasn't the norm. I was a bit of a social outcast - mind you, we had some interesting conversations." He spoke about the unusual situation of being a father at the playgroup and at the kindergarten:

> With the playgroup they all know me and they know [wife's name] so it wasn't an issue. Kindy was a very strange relationship I had with these women. Didn't have one, I should say. The kindy teachers were great. But that's the prejudice of it - it's a threat, honestly, to the women's identity if the man's doing what she perceives as her goal in life. I mean women are brought up like this. You've got to stay at home and look after the kids, and become a doormat, you know. But it doesn't work like that any more, it doesn't make sense but that's how it works. You're a threat to their identity. That's a from the heart comment. It's very true that one. They're most hostile. And it's very hard to talk to women at playcentre or such places because our culture is if you talk to women, you either know them or you're trying to get them in bed, so there is that thing there - when you just want to say 'hi' - you know?
> [Interviewer: So the main difficulty was from the women?]
> Father: Yes. Oh the men, normally they say if you do something like that you're a homosexual, but they couldn't actually say that, because you can't be, so you're a wimp, or you know, your wife dominates - you know - 'Where's your self respect?' or 'Where's your manhood?' That was part of the prejudice, [from men] but most of the prejudice was from women.

As men take on roles which were once seen as women's roles, they experience difficulties because their childcare involvement is not in line with society's expectations. Clearly, the social mores are not changing as rapidly as families' childcare arrangements.

Family 4

A father who was a single parent and the primary caregiver during much of his child's first 5 years described the changing early childhood experiences mainly in terms of the child's development, but also from the perspective of a single parent who was in paid work. Access to sufficient hours of early childhood education was an important consideration for this father, who chose a combination of childcare and kindergarten experience for his child.

At age 1 year to 2 years, the child attended a childcare centre, and the father said "I suppose a benefit for me would be: it gave me a bit of spare time. It worked out well." He described the good things about this arrangement for the child in terms of social development: "It brought him out of himself because he was a bit shy, it was a matter of getting with other kids at that time. I can't really think of anything else. He thrived on it actually."

When the child was aged 2 to 3 years, he continued to attend a childcare centre, and the benefits for the father were "about the same - a bit of spare time." The father described the benefits for the child as cognitive and language development: "It developed his mentality. His vocabulary became better."

At 3 to 4 years, the child attended a childcare centre for 4 days each week, and a kindergarten. This combined arrangement met the father's needs as a single parent in paid work: "It allowed me to work - I was working then. He had 1 day of kindergarten and 4 days at [the childcare centre] - which allowed me to work full time." The only difficulty for the father was:

> With the kindergarten it limited the hours because I had to drop him off at . . . and pick him up at 3 p.m. So the hours were quite short and I couldn't work the rest of the day. But [name of childcare centre] was 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Just the hours were a bit tricky.

Again, the father described developmental benefits for his child: "He really came out of himself as far as the language, art, painting, his reading, all that sort of stuff." He recalled that the child experienced no difficulties, "No. It was very good."

From age 4 years to 5 years, the child attended the childcare centre for 4 days and the kindergarten for 2 days, with much the same benefits. The father also mentioned the child's transition to school at this stage: "It improved his education by the time he was going to school he was really ready for school. He's doing very well now. It brought him up quite nicely for school."

This father said that he was divorced when the child was 2 years of age, and he "got custody" before the child turned 3 years. He extended his paid working hours to full time after the combined arrangement of childcare and kindergarten attendance was in place for the child.

Language Maintenance

A further way in which children's participation in different early childhood education and care services linked to changes over time in their parents' participation in work and education was through shared language and cultural experiences. The researchers expected that there would be some connections between the work patterns of the parents and the early education and care arrangements they made for their children. Surprisingly, in a number of families where language and cultural maintenance was a priority for the parents, the maintenance of cultural values had a positive impact on the potential work-force participation of the mothers. For these families, the maintenance of language and culture appeared to take priority over other concerns.

Some families described the importance of language and culture to them. They talked about the links between the child's changing early childhood education and care experiences, and parents' participation in paid work or study, in terms of language and culture. For these families, the meaning of their experiences was connected to maintenance of the Maori (or Samoan) language. Such cases suggest that the child's involvement in the kohanga reo (together with one other early childhood service) facilitated the women's moving into further education.

Family 6

The mother in this 2-parent family found that the child's attendance at a kohanga reo helped the child, herself, and the adults in the family with the Maori language. The child went to the kohanga with her mother from a very early age because her mother worked there. During the child's first year of life, the good things about this arrangement for the mother and other adults in the family were "learning the Maori language". The only difficulty for the mother was:

> Number 2 came along and then number 3. I couldn't keep up with what I'd started. I wanted to be there with her but with the second, I was uneasy, thinking will this child fit in as well as the first child had? It was a bit hard because he was a sickly child, born early, which meant that first child was put at the back and she didn't like it. That's where Daddy came in, he practically took over what I had done with her because the second child was sickly and I wasn't there but Dad was.

The benefits for the child were:

> Her culture. It's okay to learn about how to go to a marae, what to do, what to expect, the protocol of Maori, but the language was missing. It was a big thing for her to learn the language as well as the other Maori culture things.

The mother said there were no difficulties for the child with the arrangement of attending the kohanga: "no - she was really quite a forward child". The most significant value for this family was the fact that the child had a chance to learn the Maori language.

At age 1 year to 2 years, the child attended 2 types of early childhood service. The move into a concurrent combination of using a playgroup as well as the kohanga reo helped the mother to have other adults to talk to. She described the additional benefits of the kohanga reo involvement as "the support - I found support there - the staff were easy to talk to, the enjoyment of watching her doing things". This support continued during the next year, when the father first became redundant.

At age 3 and 4 years, the child no longer attended the playgroup, but she continued at the kohanga reo. Her mother said that at that age, her daughter "enjoyed it just as much. She had her first taste of independence, which was very important." The only difficulty was, when she was 3 years of age "stepping out was quite hard for her. She didn't want Mummy to go. But she did, but she didn't (she wanted both)." Again, this description of the child focuses on security and dependence *versus* independence and autonomy.

The child's mother sometimes worked part time in the kohanga reo "part time here and there - I've just finished 6 weeks with the kohanga that the children attend, working about 30 hours in the kohanga." When asked how satisfied she was about those hours, she replied "good. I'm really satisfied." Her family/whanau were satisfied too: "I find it's a job that suits both the children and I. Then my husband is free to do job interviews without wondering, 'does my wife need me to baby sit?' or whatever."

During a follow-up visit to the family, the researcher found that both parents were studying. The mother was studying Maori at the polytechnic, and described this as "really wonderful". Both parents explained that there were no problems with before- and after-school care, because their courses at the polytechnic took place during school hours and, because they now had a car, they could get back to school to collect the children when school finished. The father said that he had taken on the main responsibility for caring for the children when they were ill. The parents agreed to make this arrangement so that the mother could make full use of her study time. The bilingual unit where the child had started school had become a total immersion unit by the time the child was aged 6 years, and the parents explained that the child had become highly competent at reading in Maori.

Family 7

In another family, where the mother was the only adult in the household, both the child's and the mother's education were also influenced by the experience of kohanga reo. The mother was not in paid work during the child's first 6 years. The child attended a childcare centre from age 2 to 3 years, and then changed to a kohanga reo which she attended from age 3 to 5 years.

For the mother, using a childcare centre when the child was aged 2 to 3 years meant: "seeing her learn and having a break from her, hanging her pictures up when she got home". The mother said there were no difficulties for herself or the child, who "learnt how to sing nursery rhymes, write her name, get on with other kids, she learnt to share". It seems that the childcare centre experience was positive both for the mother and the child, but the child moved on to a kohanga reo soon after she turned 3 years of age. The mother described the child's (and her own) experience of the kohanga reo from 3 to 5 years in this way:

> She learnt how to do hymns, waiata, basic Maori language, like how to count to 10, colours, she learned all the basics and then she carried it on to school. She's in a bilingual class now. So it was really good for her, kohanga.

She said there were no difficulties for herself or the child: "no, it was good". The experience of kohanga reo meant that the mother was invited to have further language education too:

> I'm thinking of learning Maori. The kohanga wants me to go to the polytech but I've got to think about it first. I'd like to do it. The idea is to put the kids in the kohanga and then go to the polytech from there. That's the plan. They encourage mothers to learn, so they can keep up with their kids. The kid's learning Maori and you don't know anything. When she starts talking Maori at home you don't know what she's saying. This is what they want the mothers to do, go and learn it. Which is good. I mean, you know, I've got a lot of regrets about not learning it earlier . . . I left home at an early age. I didn't have a chance but I'd like to learn. I'd like to learn 'cos you know when you go to a marae, if you don't know your Maori protocol, you don't know what's going on.

Changing from one early childhood service to another meant more immersion in Maori culture and language for both the mother and the child.

Family 8

A Samoan mother also talked about connections between the child's changing early childhood education and care experiences, and her paid and voluntary work, in terms of language and culture. From birth until 4 years of age, her child did not attend an early childhood centre. There was a regular, informal childcare arrangement with the child's maternal grandfather, who lived with the family and therefore "was there all the time". The mother described this arrangement as beneficial for the child because "it was quite good for them to get to know each other".

Between the age of 4 and 5 years, the child moved into attending both a Pacific Island early childhood centre and a kindergarten. He started at kindergarten, and the mother described the good things about kindergarten for herself and the adults in her family as "it was all right for him to learn and meet other people". She recalled the benefits for the child attending kindergarten as: "it was the language because we speak Samoan at home. He spoke Samoan with his grandfather (whom he had been at home with). It was hard for them and him as well."

Half way through that year, the child went to the Pacific Island early childhood centre. The mother described the benefits for herself and the adult members of the family this way:

> We fit in all right because it's our own culture. I did a lot of voluntary work with the Samoan language nest. I was the [description of her occupation] in the group. It's mainly an organisation with the church. The Minister's wife would be the boss and she appointed me as the [occupation], all voluntary, and the other mothers who've got children were teachers or whatever you call them. Helping out with the language. This was all unpaid so I pulled out because they were using much of my time. So I pulled out and got myself a paid job. But I still do a lot of work with them, raising funds and all that.

She said the good things for the child were: "It was good for him to meet people and learn Samoan. They were only allowed to speak Samoan. He learned a lot more of the (Samoan) language."

Migrant Needs

Parents who were migrants sometimes described the difficulties their children faced at early childhood centres and schools. They discussed the meanings of their children's changing early childhood experiences from the perspective of members of a migrant culture.

Family 1

One father described his child's experiences of moving into attending kindergarten at age 3 to 4 years as:

> She was getting more friends and learning more English. The language experience is very important because we have been talking our own language at home most of the time. One thing she has to confront, once she starts at the kindy is that the older kids are talking English. That's one thing. The other thing is different culture - the kids might do things in different ways and then parents have different ways of raising their children. So [she] has to confront those problems. Once she starts getting used to different ways, she will find it easy and benefit. I think there would be lots of benefits . . .

Similarly the mother in that family said the benefits of kindergarten for her child were "routines; learning English". The difficulties for their child were:

> The language difficulty, yes. Sometimes I remember when she come home, she not very happy, but when I ask her why she said some friends like to play with her, but she don't know what they say, and they don't know what she say, so it's very confusing. Some of the other children, they know she is different - different culture, they always laugh at her - oh, '[names ethnic group] girl' - they think she's really funny, like a different person - people were laughing at her and she was feeling really upset. The first term or so she was afraid to go to kindy sometimes because one or two children were always laughing at her. Then I talked to the teachers, and the teachers say that they would keep an eye on those children and stop them teasing her. I think the teachers maybe talked to those children's mother. After that I say anybody say the same things to you? And, she says 'no, not now'. I think the first few months was hard, because the children spoke fast, and they say your eyes and hair are funny colours. I tell her we are not different, we are just a different culture - she's born in New Zealand, she is the same as the other children. They worry about what other children say. The first 3 months was hard, after that it was better.

These difficulties may have had some influence on the family's decision to stay with using a single early childhood service, even though it was sometimes difficult for them to access appropriate hours at the early childhood centre. As a couple running a small business, the main difficulty experienced by the adults when the child attended kindergarten was fitting in with the hours.

The father described his experiences this way: "Well, when there was something very important that we had to do, like go to [a large city] - to do small business, then we found it a bit of an annoyance. Perhaps we would not take [child's name] to kindergarten - we would just bring her along." The child's mother attributed similar meaning to these experiences. She experienced difficulties with the kindergarten hours: "just when we had to do something else, for business". She also made these comments, from the perspective of a mother working in the family business, about the benefits she experienced when the child started kindergarten at age 3 years: "I could have a few hours to do something else, like keep an eye out for this one [indicates younger child] and do more housework, and prepare our work at home, and when she comes home I can learn more things."

The difficulties described by this family were learning the English language, and accommodating the lack of acceptance of their culture and the racism among their children's peers. These parents persisted with using the same early childhood service for all of their children.

Summary

Several meanings underlay the families' experiences of balancing their diverse and changing early childhood education and care arrangements, with participation in paid work. The parents' descriptions eflected these concerns: access to early childhood education and care, perceptions of the child's developmental needs, gender issues, language maintenance, and migrants' needs. Interpretation of the parents' perceptions regarding the child's development indicates that the dependence *versus* independence dichotomy was a prominent focus over time. Meeting the emotional/security needs of infants and young children, and the need for cognitive and language stimulation of 4½-year-old children, were of concern.

Flexible Patterns of Work

A second area investigated concerned flexible approaches to paid work. Flexible ways of working included having flexible roles within the family, and being employed at workplaces with flexible policies or hours. The case studies were examined in the light of this question:

> *How do flexible ways of working occur over time within families with young children?*
> *What is the impact on families of these flexible ways of working?*

Gender Issues

Several families' flexible ways of working were clearly connected with the parents' views on gender roles.

Family 2

In this family, the mother was in full-time paid work, and the father worked part time on a casual basis. Both parents' patterns of paid work had undergone changes during the child's first 5 years. During the child's first year of life, several changes occurred. The father worked in a full-time paid job from the child's birth until she was about 7 months of age, then became a "full-time househusband". This happened soon after the mother resumed full-time paid work. For about 6 weeks both parents worked full time and the infant was cared for by a friend. The mother remembered that period as busy and stressful: "When we both worked it was hell, but I knew it was for 6 weeks when I took it on". After that, the mother took up a more permanent full-time position, working on average 37 hours each week, and at that point the father assumed the main responsibility for childcare.

When the child was aged 1 to 2 years, the mother continued working full time for about 37 to 38 hours per week. The father was at home, "a full-time househusband, doing odd jobs only, no regular work". This pattern, where the mother was involved in full-time paid work while the father was at home and not in regular paid work, was still in place after the child started school. When the child was aged 4 to 5 years, her mother changed to working in a different environment, but she was doing a similar type of work and was still employed 37 to 38 hours per week.

Both parents made positive comments about their flexible roles when they remembered their experiences of the first 5 years. Their described experiences suggest some focus on congruence between their perceptions of themselves and their working life.

When asked about the good things about being in paid work and having young children, the father replied: "It was good being at home more - coming home was the good thing." The main difficulties for him with paid work were "just finding the time really". The father did some paid work on a casual basis for about 15 hours per week after both children were at school, and he was quite satisfied with these flexible hours of work:

> It's getting into the routine really, [of being mainly at home]. Once you get into that routine. Getting organised in the morning, and trying to fit your housework in. I get that 3 hours of just odd jobs when I drop the kids off in the mornings . . . And I just work then, so that works well - I find work near the school and that saves me going backwards and forwards.

He thought that the other members of the family were also satisfied: "It works out well." He was satisfied with his working conditions, notably the flexibility of doing odd jobs: "The times work out well."

A number of the mother's comments suggest congruence between her personality and her work role. The mother found the good thing about being in paid work was that both she and the family members were happy with the arrangement:

> It was good to be able to be doing what I wanted to do and know that everyone else was happy at the same time. That our personal circumstances were working. That made going to work easier. And because [husband] was at home I didn't have to sort of have all that extra dropping them [2 daughters] off and picking them up and worrying about what they're doing all day.

This description suggests consistency between the mother's personality, her own needs, her work role, and the needs of the father and the children. The mother experienced some problems related to society's and employers' assumptions about roles within families. She described these difficulties as:

> The expectations of other people I guess. [Pause]
> [*Interviewer:* Yes?]
> *Mother:* You know: 'Oh you're working and you've got such a young baby.' And when I was looking for a job people would ask me who would mind the children when they were sick. The job I actually took was with the people that didn't ask that question. [Laughs] I figured if they had to ask that, it was a pretty stupid question, they wouldn't ask that of a man going for a job, 'Who minds your children during the day?' It was irrelevant. It's difficult too - it would be for any parent when the children are ill and you're going off to work, knowing that they're not 100 percent or if [children's father] is ill - which doesn't really happen very often.

The mother was currently working 37½ hours per week, which she described as "Good. I love the job." She perceived that the family were satisfied too, partly because her working hours were flexible:

> Oh they're not complaining [laughs]. It works well because I can adapt my hours. If I need to finish at a certain time because of something the children have got on I just do it - and then go early the next day or something.

She described the kind of paid work she was doing, and her conditions of work, enthusiastically: "Oh it's great. It's wonderful . . . and the atmosphere is just brilliant." The mother's views on mothers of young children working (being in paid employment) were:

> I'm quite happy for mothers of young children to be working [laughter]. Well, different things work for different people. It wouldn't work for us both of us working and it was something that we didn't want. So we've been fortunate that we were both able to keep it that way [mother in full-time paid work, father in part-time paid work and the primary caregiver].

She made similar comments about fathers of young children being in paid work: "It is the same answer really. It should be whatever works best for them. I think it's unfortunate if people feel they have to go to work, or stay home, or to work from financial needs."

The father's views on mothers of young children working were also affected by his own family's situation: "It's hard work. You appreciate it a lot more. You know what it's like from doing it yourself." His views on fathers of young children being in paid employment were also closely connected to his experience of gender roles within the family:

> It makes no difference really, whether it's mothers or fathers. It's good that one of us can stay home, and it's easier for the children - whether it's the father or mother, you know - whoever wants to - if one stays at home. I think there are more [fathers] at home now than there used to be. It's harder for men to be at home. I suppose it's like when the women first went out to the work force, for the women to be in the work force it was hard. Now when the men are home with the children the women don't make it that easy for a man . . . some think we are a bit different I suppose. Just like when the women go into the work force - the tables can turn.

The father was also involved in voluntary, unpaid work in the community during the first 5 years of the child's life. When the child was aged 1 to 3 years, he said that for 1 hour each week he "helped out at the mothers' support group - I looked after the children there." Later when the child was at kindergarten from the age of 3 to 5 years he recalled that he "mother helped" at kindergarten, and then "helped at the school doing odd jobs, but we didn't have mother helping there". After the child turned 5 years he helped at the school about once per month. His experiences of voluntary work also related to gender issues:

> You feel out of place I suppose. If you went to any playgroups or that you didn't really feel - some tried to make you feel welcome but it's hard to explain - you have to get used to it and the more relaxed you get [as a father at home] the more relaxed other people around you get. I did mother helping at kindergarten and by the time I decided I was quite capable of doing mother helping I felt quite confident so I fitted in quite well and the kids seemed to enjoy having a man there for a change and they seemed to flock around.

The father felt his own family's situation was unusual because fathers in 2-parent families who undertake the main responsibility of caring for their children tend to resume paid work rather rapidly:

> The househusbands I've met only seem to have lasted 6 months or so. They seem to end up going back to work. It's the same when the women first go out to the work force. It's hard at first, but when you've got over it, then it's all right. I don't

> stop doing the washing because it's the weekend. There's a lot of women who expect that [wife's name] comes home and cooks tea and does the washing in the weekend, but it doesn't happen that way.

It appears that the changes that took place over time in this family's work and childcare arrangements, and the flexible roles within the family, affected the family members in a positive way. In addition, the mother experienced a flexible and accommodating workplace after she took up a new position when the child was aged 4 years. In this case, flexible full-time work meant a 37½-hour working week. The flexibility of the mother's new work situation, her enjoyment of her paid work, and her appreciation of the working environment, all seemed to benefit the wellbeing of the family members. In this situation, flexibility and congruence were described simultaneously, and flexibility meant congruence between both of the parents' perceptions of themselves and their work roles.

Family 5

The mother in another family, when asked about her views on fathers of young children being in paid employment, made these rather similar comments about gender and flexible work:

> Ah yes, well. It would be nice to see the unpaid work shared equally now wouldn't it? I think it's outrageous that that's considered to be normal and ordinary for fathers to be in paid work, and that for mothers who do it, it's considered to be unnatural and uncaring and unmotherly. It's as normal for either sex to wish to do it. The structures of work ought to allow either to do it with equal facility one way or the other.

These interviews reflect the changes in gender roles going on in families.

Flexibility in Workplaces

Parents also explained how flexible practices in their workplaces had had positive effects on their families. However, parents who had access to home computing as a means of homeworking, and flexible schedules, sometimes participated in long hours of work.

Family 5

The mother in this 1-parent family spent on average 65 hours per week in paid work when her child was aged 5 years. A significant number of these hours were spent at home. She described some of the flexible arrangements in her workplace which were useful when her children were ill and she was unable to organise childcare at short notice:

> Well, I've got my computer hooked up by modem to work so I can still send electronic messages so I can carry on doing that sort of work. So I work from home. And I courier material. I'm thinking of getting a fax so I can fax stuff backwards and forwards. And on occasions when it was desperate [to attend meetings with overseas officials] I got my secretary to come home and look after [the child] while I went into work to do that. So it's just any resources you can, to cobble it together.

Her views on mothers of young children being in paid work were that it was:

> Necessary to preserve your sanity for some. And others don't wish to do it. It's one of those things where it's opportunity and choice. Those who want to shouldn't have any extra barriers put in their way because they have children. I think I've been extremely fortunate because I have the support of places that I've worked and the sorts of jobs I've had. As I said when [the child] had [an illness], I got my secretary to come home one day to look after her. Once they were well enough I took them in to work with some videos and had them in the boardroom. That's because of my position . . . that I can do those things. And those are the things that make work almost impossible for heaps, and heaps and heaps of women. So it's an extraordinarily difficult act to juggle, I find it difficult enough and I've got everything going for me. It's hard enough trying to cope with lack of sleep and too much to do, the pull of the children and the pull of your job, without having all the other things that can happen like co-workers disapproving of you because you're not putting as many hours in as them. And bosses not wanting to recognise the fact that if your kids are sick you've got to go home or got to deal with it. All those other things which just make it utterly impossible.

This mother cared for her children before school and arrived at work at about 9.15 a.m. This flexible arrangement of working at home in the early mornings helped to cover the before-school care:

> That's a squash because you can't leave the kids unattended - or you can but they won't accept responsibility before 8.30 a.m. at school. And because they won't accept responsibility I won't leave them there, before 8.30 a.m., I'm not willing to take the risk. But it's . . . a real rush, get them there drop them off at the crack of 8.30 a.m. and rush off to get to [important meetings] on time. It's a bit of a pain. There's such a lot to get done in the mornings: breakfasts, lunches and dressed. I work in the mornings. I get up at 5.30 a.m. usually and work here. That's so that the kids have a bit more time to sleep in but it does mean that we finish up a bit squashed. I tend to forget what the time is, come to, and realise it's 7.40 a.m. and they're still asleep and I haven't done the lunches yet and I'm meant to be [at work] at 9.15 a.m. It's hellish in the morning sometimes.

Family 11

In another family, a father working as a consultant also found that having home computers allowed some flexibility for the family. The child's mother was in full-time paid work when the child was aged 6 months to 5 years. The father had moved to working as a consultant when the child was almost 3 years of age. In this position, he spent on average around 50 hours per week at his paid work, and it was "not a 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. job". He was reasonably satisfied because there was flexibility: "That's all right. I can choose myself when I go to work and when I don't. And if I don't go to work, I work here . . . I'd like them [the hours] to be none, but that's all right - I'm quite satisfied about that."

Both parents were interviewed at home in the evening. The father's interview took place from 9 p.m. to 10.15 p.m., immediately after his return from the airport. He had been away on business-related travel, and when he discussed how satisfied his family were with his hours of work he said "unfortunately I'm travelling too much, although there's nothing I can really do about that". During a follow-up telephone interview when the child was aged 6 years, the father explained that the family no longer employed a nanny because she had departed overseas, and in order to be more available to meet the needs of the children, he had decreased his hours of paid work to part time.

Workplace Flexibility and Shift Work

Flexibility in the workplace was not only confined to occupations where parents had ready access to advanced information technology, together with the option of working at home if necessary. A few 2-parent families found that shift work offered flexibility, provided that the parents themselves could choose the shifts they worked.

Family 10

This father was able to select an early shift, and consequently he spent more time with his young children. He had remained in the same job from the child's birth, and worked on average 40 hours per week. He was the main income earner in the family, and said the benefits of paid work were: "the money of course. My job is the money job." He experienced no difficulties with being in paid work and having young children:

> I don't have any really because I get to spend a lot of time with my children. I'm lucky. We all go to bed at the same time. We're all in bed by 9 p.m. because I start at 4 a.m. They're all in bed. So when I get home, I'm home before them, before they get home from school. So it works out really excellent. I quite like it.

He was very satisfied about these hours of work:

> Excellent. I love it . . . we work around the clock but a lot of guys don't like doing the early shifts and I work the early shifts all the time. We swop and change shifts - and it works out that I enjoy working the early shifts all the time which I really love. And when I got home on days like this [it was a very warm summer evening] and I can go to the beach. But I couldn't work a 9 to 5 job - I did it once, when I first left school I was a clerk in an office and I hated that. I hated being in an office. This job came along and I jumped at it. I love the hours they're not a problem. I'm an early riser.

This description can be interpreted as an example of congruence of personal characteristics at home and at work. The experience of continuity between personality, work, and home life occurred when the work was seen as flexible and not constricting.

The father perceived that his family was satisfied too: "Well, it works out good, like I get to spend a lot of time with my kids. I'm very lucky in that a lot of my friends in 9 to 5 jobs don't. I do." He was "very happy" about his field of work, although he expressed some reservations about working conditions in general:

> It's like anything these days. They're going backwards really. I'm not very happy with that. The Contracts Act, I'm not happy with that at all. Gotta work on, I suppose. I gotta work that's it. I still like my job. It's the best job I ever had. And I like going to work, so.

The mother's views about fathers of young children working support the positive effects of the father's shift work:

> I don't mind my husband working - I'm lucky, he's a shift worker so he's home more time than he is at work, and I don't think I could live with him if he was 9 to 5. Because I'd be stuck with that morning getting the kids up and the afternoon after-school sessions but with my husband he's home most of the time and I can come home from work like I have today, puttered around the garden while he's taken the kids off to swimming. And come back. I've had my little bit of settling down after work and then I can get into cooking tea and joining in with the kids.

> So I'm lucky. I don't know what a 9 to 5 - I don't think I'd ever like it. He was home all day today so he cared for my 2-year-old while I went to work, he had a good day and I had a good day.

The mother participated in part-time paid work when the child was aged from 2 years to 6 years. When the child was aged 2 to 3 years she worked on average 30 hours per week. The year that the child was from 3 to 4 years, a younger sibling was born (the third child in the family) and the mother reduced her hours of paid work to around 18 hours per week. When the child was aged 4 to 5 years her paid work averaged 20 hours per week, and at age 5 to 6 years she worked a minimum of 12 hours per week. Her comments about the father's shift work suggest that the flexibility he had in choosing his shifts sometimes helped the family's childcare arrangements and thus facilitated her participation in part-time work. The mother was the main caregiver when the child was ill, before school, and in the school holidays. However, the father's early shift meant that he was available for after-school care, and both parents helped the child with his reading and other school work.

These parents' descriptions suggest that where there was workplace flexibility, there was also congruence between their personal characteristics, their work roles, and their family life.

Flexibility and Long Hours of Work

Self-employment also provided a flexible option for a few families. In these situations too, though, long hours of work sometimes affected family life.

Family 1

During the first year of the child's life, the child's father worked as a professional for, on average, 40 hours per week. His wife found that year very lonely because she was at home with 2 young children and the baby. She was also "scared" when he was away from home working in the evenings. At her suggestion, they purchased a small business during the year the child was aged 1 to 2 years. Thereafter the mother worked on average 50 hours per week in the business, and the father averaged 60 hours per week. A fourth child was born during the next year, and several members of the extended family stayed and offered support with the children, and with the work of the business.

The long hours of paid work impacted on the family in some ways. For example, in the evenings the children remained behind the door of the shop, and the father described this as the only difficulty. He would have preferred to spend more time helping the children with their reading and other homework: "They don't understand that we have to work in the evenings, there's no time." However, the parents thought the benefits outweighed the difficulties:

> Working from home, we can be more close to our daughter, we can look after her - anytime she needs our care or special attention. We can go straight to her. If you are working somewhere else, either my wife or I have to ring up and find out how the children are, to find out what happened to them, but now we are working for ourselves, we can keep an eye on the kids and see what happens. We don't have much time for newspaper or TV so we catch up on the world through our customers.

The father also described his working conditions and hours as his family's preferred way of operating in the current social and economic climate:

> So far yes, I'm quite happy to do that [60 hours per week] because there's no other options. Employment conditions [in the country] are poor and since we have been running our own business I find it more convenient to us - looking after our own children. I think the family are satisfied - things are more flexible in a way - even though we work more hours. If something happens to one of the children we can work fewer hours, and then longer hours later, during the day. . . . Actually, I work with my wife, I can see her more often because we work together - we can help each other out, see her more often, discuss the problems without leaving it too late. Not as if I was working in another place.

Long hours of work sometimes impacted on the degree of flexibility available to families. In some 2-parent families, where a parent in full-time paid work participated routinely in long hours of work due to the demands of the workplace or the employers, the other parent tended to seek more casual part-time work arrangements. They perceived that no other choice was available.

Summary

Flexible arrangements meant that parents could meet the performance demands of their employers and the needs of their children and other family members. However, for some parents, workplace flexibility also meant experiencing long hours of work. Interpretation of the parents' transcripts shows how flexibility on gender issues or in the workplace was linked to descriptions of congruence between family members' home life and working life experiences.

Parental Leave

Parental leave was another phenomenon explored through the case studies. We delved further into parents' experiences of leave around the time of the child's birth by addressing this question:

How do parents perceive and experience parental leave?

The children in this study were just over 5 years of age when we arranged the first interviews. They had been born in 1988, the year after the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 (reprinted 1991) was passed. The Act entitles all female employees who become pregnant to extended leave of up to 52 weeks if, at the expected date of delivery, they "will have been for the immediately preceding 12 months in the employment of the same employer for at least 10 hours in each week" (s.23(b)). It also entitles a male employee to up to 52 weeks of extended leave if he is the "spouse" (legally married, or living with but not legally married) of the pregnant woman, and if he intends to assume the care of the child of the pregnancy. The Act specifies further that where an employee and an employee's spouse are both entitled to extended leave, the combined entitlement of up to 52 weeks of extended leave shall be shared between them in specified ways. Alternative entitlements of shorter periods of maternity leave of up to 14 weeks, and of paternity leave of up to 10 days, are also specified in the Act. In addition, there are entitlements for adoptive parents, which did not apply to the 11 case-study families. Among the 11 families, 2 of the mothers had had extended leave, and 1 couple had experienced extended leave shared between parents. Parents in temporary or casual work were among those who were ineligible for leave.

Some concerns which emerged when the parents described their parental-leave experiences were related to gender issues, financial constraints, and the impact of long hours of work on families. Their descriptions of parental-leave experiences and gender issues illustrate aspects of equality and difference issues. These include an emphasis on the mother's and father's equal sharing of parental leave and the unpaid work of caring for their infants, and on parental-leave policies and practices which accommodate the specific difference of breastfeeding.

Gender Issues

Family 5

This mother, who worked in the public sector at the time of the birth, took a year's unpaid parental leave: "I took a year's unpaid leave with the usual rules about having to give a month's notification when you wanted to go back and after you'd been back for 6 months you got paid 6 weeks' worth - standard public service." She was satisfied with the amount of leave she had around the time of the birth, and she said "it was fine". The mother provided a detailed description, based on her experience, of the importance of having accessible and adequate parental-leave provision, and of maintaining contact with the workplace. Some key comments included:

> The formal provisions are only a very small part of it. The most important part is about still feeling connected to the workplace and therefore feeling confident about going back. [Describes the difficulties associated with restructuring of the workplace while off on parental leave] . . . It's really hard when you've been out of the work force for a year. It's hard to feel confident and assertive about your ability to deliver and perform. Because a whole bunch of things happened in a year and everybody is talking about things you don't know about because you've not been there during that time. So I think there needs to be a strong obligation on employers to maintain connections with workers through regular newsletters inviting them to whatever meetings there are of their section, providing childcare for them so they can actually get to those meetings, including them in any training that goes on, developmental activity that goes on and doing that really actively, not just saying 'this is on' and expecting the person who's off on parental leave to make all the arrangements so that they can get there. But it should be the employer's responsibility to make sure. Because I'm sure that those sorts of things are the major determinants of whether women successfully reconnect back at the level they were at when they leave or whether they say: 'No, I can't hack that, I'll try something that's less full-on, less demanding on me', because your confidence drops so you pitch yourself lower. Enough of a diatribe. But I really think it's important.

Her views and experiences highlight some of the gender issues underlying parental-leave provision and uptake:

> Parental leave is one of the major mechanisms we could use to help shift the responsibility so it isn't seen as always being the woman's responsibility. I think that we ought to think about some ways of, at least in the public service, strongly encouraging maybe even requiring that leave to be shared between men and women. At the moment it is labelled: 'Parental leave and employment protection' but it is almost entirely the mother who takes that leave. There's very few men who do and having just a gender neutral entitlement isn't going to change that unless you have employers, even, saying 'it's 6 months for the man and 6 months for the woman unless those parents (or if there's only one) can show why it should be different from that.' So that there's some strong pressure to have men take it up.

These comments emphasise gender equality in parental-leave experiences.

Family 11

This 2-parent family was the only 1 of the total of 60 families where the father was eligible and willing to make use of the "gender neutral entitlement" by applying for a substantial period of parental leave. He was in paid work in the public sector at the time of the child's birth.

He applied for parental leave, and he described the conditions of this leave in a way that reflected equality of provision:

> It was 6 months. . . . You just leave your desk as it was and go away and come back 6 months later and it's still there and some of the files are still there. The work's still there and nothing's changed - you just weren't there. That's how it was for me.

The father was reasonably satisfied with the amount of leave he had around the time of the birth, but he said:

> Well we could have gone for more. Because [wife's name] had done the first 6 months and I'd done the second that was all there was allowed. I could have stayed off a lot more time, but that wasn't an issue. We had to move to security - getting back into employment. Otherwise you lose all your benefits. [Pause]
> [Interviewer: Oh yes - what sort of benefits?]
> Father: You have to come back and be in the work force for another 6 months then you get all this pay you know - we worked it all out. They didn't like that when I applied for that, you know: 'You can't have that. It's only for people going on parental leave - women'. 'Ah but that legislation doesn't say it has to be a woman you know. You read it.' So it helped . . . that was good. No, it could have been longer. I think that's one of the things about parental leave, it could be longer. But then again it's a bit of an imposition on the employer to hold your job open that long - when it's too long. A year's about right because any further than that and you're starting to get out of touch, because the business or the work, of course, was changing very dramatically - very computerised.

He described his views on the leave provisions which should be available for mothers when they have a baby this way:

> I think it is very good like it is now [the current legislation], but I do know of situations where employers have actually terminated people - made them - a friend of ours is a classic example - You've got the law, but the law isn't strong enough. And you've got this thing, if you did it, you wouldn't get a job anyway, because in certain cultures, particularly financial cultures it's about being part of the culture. If you stand up for your rights then you're out of the culture. So it's all very nice having these laws but if you stand up for yourself you're liable to make a name as a stirrer or whatever and then it does, it will, affect you. It's my observations - the law isn't strong enough. It's a good idea, but no. It's got to be improved - I presume - to make it. It's got to be easier to do something about it than it is now. So all you're doing is creating a situation where a person has to sue someone. Great idea, but a lot of women and men aren't equipped to do that, financially or mentally. The only ones that do are the bitter and twisted ones. A lot of people just cut their losses.

He made these comments about the leave provisions he wanted to be available for fathers when their baby is born:

> Same as for women. The law needed to have a way of enforcing it that isn't so damn complicated and the law should be tightened up so you can't do it - so [employers] can't say to the person well if you don't like it, sue me. There has to be some sort of - couched in such a way that the person doesn't have to do that. So maybe some penalty provisions and some ease of reference so they could go to an arbitrator, or not even an arbitrator, because there's nothing really to arbitrate: 'Did you make this person redundant, terminated while on parental leave?' And if you do that - well, end of story. Whatever your motives are.

Again, these comments emphasise equality in provision and uptake. The father also stressed the importance of staying up to date with the work environment while on parental leave. This was based on his own experience of parental leave and in the work force:

> It's very important in our age for both husband and wife to keep up with the technology. If you're out of the work force then it's very hard to get back in because the work environment is changing so fast, all right?
> [Interviewer: Yes you mentioned that on the computing side.]
> Father: Yes, that's the obvious example - it was computers because the women left and went home - I've had those conversations with women - they used to be typists and they went to be word processor operators right, well we don't really have those any more. I can show you a programme on that computer that would make word processing redundant you know. It's . . . the latest stuff out. I mean I don't need a secretary because I can do everything I want and that's the way I do it. . . . So, getting back to parental leave, the environment has changed. I don't think it should be longer than a year and I think it should be a right to have it. But after a year you can lose touch, quickly.

Focusing specifically on gender issues, equality, and parental leave, he added:

> I think every man should do it [parental leave]. But every man won't do it because it's a very un-male thing - it's not the male role. There's a lot of prejudice about it too. Even now. And most of the prejudice is from women. . . . You're a threat to their identity.

The mother in this family was also in full-time paid work the year their child was born. She applied for parental leave: "It was just after that Act. It was parental leave, as opposed to maternity leave, and I took 6 months." She described the conditions of her own leave in a way that emphasised equality, and parental leave as a gender-neutral entitlement:

> I was granted 12 months' parental leave, but my employer was aware that the intention was to stay only for 6 months from the paid work force and that [husband's name] would take the next 6 months, so I probably let them know a month before I started back.

She found that this arrangement fitted in with breastfeeding the infant: "[We] both had 6 months home with him. Me first, because I was breastfeeding him, then [his father]." This description continues to reflect the equality *versus* difference issue and covers breastfeeding.

However, the mother was not entirely satisfied with the amount of leave she had around the time of the birth:

> Probably in hindsight not at all because I worked up to 10 days before [the child] was born. I mean, that was my choice, but it's something that I feel very strongly about now, that it's really important that you're rested before you have the child. It was a particularly difficult time for me because I finished work and had been very busy at work and came home to a very active 3-year-old who wasn't used to having mummy around. . . . After the birth I had the 6 months at home, but that's hardly a rest. That's one of the interesting things I found going back to work after having [the baby], and we organised a holiday at the end of [husband's] 6 months at home, and people said, 'but you've just had a holiday'. I had 6 months at home with a new baby. That is not a holiday. All of my managers - I was the only one with children, so they had no experience.

The mother went on to describe the leave provisions that she thought should be available for mothers when they have a baby as:

> I think quite often that a 12-month period is a bit restrictive because you focus on the time, that it's 12 months, rather than a time that's appropriate for them. I think quite often 12 months is more than enough time, but they get so focused on having to get back to work in 12 months that they don't enjoy the time that they are at home. I think it would be better if it were, not so much open ended because employers have a right as well as the mothers, but definitely not as - I think maybe 15 months would be better than 12 months, mainly because the first birthday is a real milestone, in my experience, in terms of feeling that it's safe to be away from the child.

Her views on the leave provisions she wanted to be available for fathers when their baby is born supported fathers' active involvement with their infants:

> The same. The same - well not so much the same. Theoretically with the Parental Leave Act the same provisions are available for fathers at the moment, but I think it should be easier than it was, when [husband] did it. And he was the first male to take parental leave in . . . and it was a very interesting process - very interesting. And it's not so much the provisions that I'd like to see made the same for the men, but maybe the same acceptance - that's the thing that I'd like to see changed. It still is a fairly uncommon thing to happen. I think it's changing, I think it is getting more common, but it still isn't something you hear about every week, and I'd like to see that happen. To see more fathers taking [6 months' parental leave].

The mother shared these additional experiences related to parental leave:

> For me, everything went quite smoothly, especially when I had [. . .], the second child. It wasn't quite as straightforward with [first child], but that was a few years before, and I think things have changed since then. One of the big questions is, when someone is on parental leave, are they still an employee? So, do they still get involved in things that an employee would be involved in, i.e., strategic decision making. An example that I can think of in this is when [I had leave] from the public service when [my older child] was born, my position was upgraded and advertised in the public service official circular, and I found out, indirectly. Those kinds of things I think should - I should have known about. But I think that's probably an isolated incident rather than the norm. Because people I know now that are on parental leave are still kept involved in a lot of things that are going on. Obviously that's the choice of the parent as well. Some don't wish to have any contact while they're at home. What they actually advertised was the job

> description that I wrote. I think that was an isolated incident. If I had not been made aware of it I probably would not have been able to apply for it.

She perceived that sharing the parental leave had affected the child in a positive way as he grew older. For example, the child had been cared for by either of his parents when he was ill, an arrangement which his mother described as: "Fine. It wasn't a problem. And it wasn't an issue for [him] as well because of having had those 6 months at home with his father. It wasn't like having second best . . . I don't think there's really that distinction."

Family 9

The parents in this family also discussed parental leave as a gender and equal opportunities issue. The father took 2 weeks of annual leave around the time of the birth. He felt he missed out on having paternity leave, because his contract specified that leave was unpaid, although he said there was an additional small clause at the end of the document about payment provisions. The mother, who had up to 4 years of unpaid parental leave granted by her workplace in the private sector, noted that changes had occurred in workplaces since that time (1988): "It's hard, how it's changed. The employers have now got more workers to pick and choose from. It's not an employees' market any more, like it was when I used the parental policies." She stressed the importance of remaining up to date with work practices and changes in technology. She also raised the issue, related to income and parental leave, of retaining the same salary and grade on return from leave:

> Is there any way to make employers take you back at the same grade you were on? What we had was brilliant. I'm not sure what we do have now. I suppose that's up to us to keep up with things while we are on leave. You don't want to have the belief that you've got a job to go back to, and suddenly find out 'no you haven't'. It's not so much the job either, it's the level. I know you don't want to go back and do a basic clerical job any more.

When followed up a year later, the mother in this family had resumed regular part-time paid work at her usual place of employment. She explained, based on her own leave experience, that 1 year of parental leave is appropriate for women in terms of maintaining contact and continuity with the workplace, whereas parental leave of up to 5 years makes this more difficult: "Training, keeping up with changes in technology is a problem with our 5-year leave. Not so much [a problem] with a 12-month leave."

Parental-leave experiences are related to gender issues. More specifically, equality and difference issues underlay the parents' experiences. There is a perception at some workplaces that parental leave is a "holiday". The parents who had actually experienced extended parental leave were concerned about maintaining connections with the workplace.

Financial Constraints

Some parents had no access or limited access to parental leave, either because they were ineligible, or because they were constrained by financial circumstances.

Family 6

This mother was in paid work the year her first child was born, but she did not apply for leave: "As soon as I found out I was pregnant I finished. It was my choice." She thought that mothers should remain entitled to 1 year's leave, but that some income was needed:

> I'll still stay with the year, for the simple reason because . . . because you're going to miss out . . . for the child becomes more alert after 6 months. So I still go with the year. It would be nice to be paid but you've got to be realistic. I think they should be paid half, and their holiday pay or their leave that's owing to them for that year. So they have a weekly income.

The father was in full-time paid work the year his first child was born. He took no parental leave. When asked if this was his choice, or if his workplace did not allow him to take leave, he replied:

> I just got the day when my wife went into labour. I got more time off with our second child. I had to stay home and look after the first child because the second child had to stay in hospital, he was in and out of hospital a lot of the time. When [first child] was born I'm not sure if they would have let me have more time off because the place was pretty funny about that. They were all right though.

The year that the second child was born, he changed his place of work, and the next year he was made redundant. The father was not too dissatisfied with the leave he had when his first child was born: "for myself, it was all right." He said that mothers should receive "full wages for a year". The mother commented that fathers needed a month of paid leave: "Just a month. The first week is more or less getting used to the child, settling in the child. I'd feel more happier than him going straight back to work. It's good to have the support." The emphasis here is on the father supporting the mother and infant.

Family 8

The mother in this family was in the paid work force during the year before the child was born. She had 2 older children aged 2 and 8 years at the time of the birth. She applied for leave from her workplace and was granted 1 year of unpaid leave: "I was allowed to have up to a year but I don't take that long. And I didn't get any pay while I was staying home." During the first weeks at home after the birth, her husband helped her and this was "okay". When the infant turned 1 month of age she resumed a 40-hour week of shift work, leaving the infant at home in the care of his grandfather: "I had no choice, we needed the money so I went back to work when [child] was 1 month old, I went full time." The mother explained that she was still breastfeeding her baby and, had she been able to afford it, she would have stayed home for a year. But she could not afford to wait for the lump sum payment - she needed the money on a day-to-day basis. She made these comments about the leave provisions that she wanted to be available for mothers when they have a baby:

> We normally like to take how long you want, and say if you go back after 6 months they will pay you a lump sum of money for while you were off. If you take maternity leave for a year and then work for 6 months, then they will pay you that year you were off. So instead of giving you the lump sum 6 months later when you go back, I would prefer to stay home and get paid.

The mother thought that fathers should have up to a month's leave when their baby is born: "A month - longer it's too painful at home." [Said with humour]. "It's like looking after two babies." She summarised her own experience this way: "I would have loved to have stayed home longer with my babies. For my own health as well, but because of all the bills . . ."

The mother's income was needed to support the family, and she described how their socioeconomic circumstances prevented her from breastfeeding. This case highlights the complexities of infant feeding practices, discussed in chapter 3. Here, paid leave would have maintained breastfeeding. Aspects of the equality and difference issue were sometimes complicated by financial constraints and life circumstances.

Parental Leave and Long Hours of Work

Among some families, long hours of paid work had an impact on the parents' experiences around the time of the birth. The experiences and views of some of the fathers who managed staff provide a further perspective on parental leave.

Family 3

The year his second child was born this father was working, on average, 60 hours per week. He did not take any leave at the time of the birth, and described his decision this way:

> This was my choice. I had a commitment to my job, my employer, and our family circumstances didn't warrant me taking any additional leave to support the family unit. It was a very busy time at work when she was born which was unfortunate because I was due to go to [an overseas city] for a conference and it had to be cancelled because the birth was late, so I guess I was dissatisfied from that aspect really but it was nothing to do with the employer.

He said that after the birth the family had "very little help. There was close family support but being the second the process was much easier, the stress levels were lower. It was fine." He described the leave provisions he wanted to be available for mothers when they have a baby as: "I guess it needs to be tailored to the individual - what meets their . . . circumstances but with reasonable cognisance of the employer's obligations and needs." His views on leave for fathers were:

> I think there's a need to have access to time immediately around the birth. I guess beyond that it's hard to say. I guess I have a very straight focus on it. The employer has to have continuity of work, so there is that obligation, but I think the social directions that some people are pushing would have a very lenient approach and to allow significant time off does disrupt the business.

The mother, who was in the paid work force in the public sector the year the child was born, chose to resign. She ceased paid work 6 months before the birth. Although she was eligible, she did not apply for parental leave: "I chose not to because I didn't know when I was going to be able to return." She thought mothers should be able to have a year's parental leave: "At least a year. By then they've decided definitely whether they're returning or not. That's giving them the option to go back earlier if they want to, I presume."

After the birth she had help from her mother and mother-in-law, and she thought this worked out well. However, she described some concerns about balancing the demands of paid work and the needs of the family. These were related to the father's long hours of work and his "commitment to the job". She made these comments about the leave provisions she wanted to be available for fathers when their child is born, which suggest some implications of fathers' long hours of work:

> I would have liked [husband] to have had just a week off after the baby was born. He went straight back to work. I think he recovered with a night's sleep and went off to work the next day. He had to. He knew that I was looked after and there was nothing he could have really done at home.

The father made detailed comments about parental leave, and his recommendations were based on his experience as an employer and a parent:

> I guess my view as an employer is that parental leave provisions in the public sector are grossly abused. Certainly in our company there are rights for mothers to return to the work force after the 12-month period which does create a lot of issues for that business to operate effectively and increases the cost of work, cost of operation because you can't fill it on a permanent basis - casualising the role giving lower productivity and our records indicate that very few mothers actually do return after that period, so in fact it's just a delayed impact on the business, I think while there should be an obligation to re-employ, there needs to be more flexibility in the type of role a person comes back to. It can often be more flexible to suit a gradual return to the work force. So I'd say the current policy our company (which I think are general for any public sector employer) are very well loaded for the benefit of the employee against the benefit of the employer. . . . The experience we've had is that most mothers leave with good intentions to come back, they may be saying those words with no real intent to come back but only to protect some other provision such as insurance for sickness, not that we provide [this] ourselves but other employers do protect other entitlements, and maybe get access to a bonus payment as available if they do return for a 6-month period. The motivations are wrong, quite often. They're not actually coming back to make a worthwhile contribution in the long-term. It's a very short-term focus. Bonus is 6 weeks' pay after a 6-month return to work. So it's a reasonable incentive to come back but I think it is an abused offering. I think if we could have an arrangement where there was a more flexible approach to parental leave and really make available more casual work that may suit some mothers' circumstances. I know from my own experience the demands of home do change once you've got a young family.

He also added this point from the perspective of an employer:

> Parental-leave provisions should reflect the ability of the employer to actually deliver - our company is a large company of 4,000 staff so we can generally cover certain things but if there were 40 staff it would be very difficult to keep jobs and make alternative arrangements so it does need to reflect the size of the employer and their ability to offer their services.

Summary

The meanings associated with parental leave were related, then, to the parents' personal, employment, and financial circumstances. As illustrated by these case studies, parents' concerns included gender issues, financial constraints, long hours of work, and employers' needs. Their descriptions of parental-leave experiences and gender issues illustrate aspects of equality and difference issues. These include an emphasis on the mother's and father's equal sharing of parental leave and the unpaid work of caring for their infants, and on parental-leave policies and practices which accommodate the specific difference of breastfeeding. The experiences and perceptions of fathers who were employers show a focus on "commitment to the job", workplace productivity, and financial implications for family members.

Experiences of Parents in Paid Work, Study, and Job Seeking

Finally, the case studies sought to explore in depth the experiences of labour-force participation among the families. This question was addressed:

How do parents describe their experiences of paid work, study, or seeking paid work?

The parents described a range of experiences related to participating in paid work, study, and job seeking. Some of the key issues discussed include: parents in paid work and the care of sick children, combining study and family life, the implications of long hours of paid work, and the effects on families of unemployment and job seeking.

Parents, Sick Children, and Paid Employment

Some families had flexible employers or working conditions which enabled them to cope when their children were sick. Others experienced difficulties related to financial constraints.

Flexible Workplaces

Family 11

One father drew on his own experiences and made these comments about his experience of leave in the work force when the children were ill:

> Well we've both got in our contract if a member of the family is ill you can go home and look after them. It's just there - tied to sick leave. In both our cases I think it's just 10 days each. It's slightly different - because we're consultants - that's really what we are - both of us. [Wife] doesn't have a time thing in her contract, I do. But I just ignore it - you know. 'You're expected to work this' but - 'What are you going to do, fire me? That's your problem not my problem. If you don't like it, fine with me'. I mean that's the whole concept of the contract. Providing you're doing - as a consultant, you do what you like. I can actually go and get my work and bring it home and so can [wife work at home]. I've got the technology here, we've the computers here and all I've got to do is go and get the files. So in cases when [child] has been sick we've gone in there and got all our staff [in the office] and he's played in there and got better, and I've done all I've got to do, and then I just take the rest of the time off. So it's slightly different what we do, but in theory we've got 10 days and you can use your sick leave. That's the way it should be. It's got to be there. Even if you're the only breadwinner, if [wife] is sick . . . The question doesn't get asked [by employers] at all. We just put down sick leave . . .

Similarly, the mother provided a fairly positive description of her experiences as a parent in the work force with a sick child:

> I've actually been fortunate in that all the time I have been working my employer has been particularly good about leave when the children are sick and it's just been treated as my sick leave and I'm really not aware that it can be different than that. So I think - an acceptance that if the child is sick the mother, or father, can be at home, if it means working from home which is what we've both done in the past. I think rather than having specific provisions available it needs to be something that's worked out between the individual and the employer.

Family 3

Another father made these comments about the leave he thought should be available for parents in the work force when their young children are ill. They reflect his position as both an employer and a parent:

> I think there should be adequate access to leave off in lieu of sick leave to attend to family matters - paid up to a certain level - it can't be something that can be easily abused. It's a fine line and very difficult to actually manage it and police but there should be some facility for that.

The mother had experienced no difficulties with getting leave when her children were ill. She thought that it should be possible to have leave to care for sick children, and to "take the day off and be paid for it". She raised the question: "Is it not normal that people ask for it and they get it?"

Financial Constraints
Several other families experienced considerable difficulties. Financial constraints meant that taking unpaid leave was a problem for them when their children were ill, and some were aware of the risk of losing their jobs.

Family 8
This mother had the main responsibility for caring for the children when they were ill. When the child was aged 6 years, she was in paid work for 32 hours per week. She said she would like paid sick leave to be available for parents in the work force to care for their sick children. She used her own sick leave when her children were ill: "I never have a sick day myself, I leave it for the children. So no matter how very sick I am myself I still go to work. I save it for them. I get 10 days a year at the moment. I space them out." She thought that having paid domestic leave was the only suitable option for working parents with sick children: "I don't think they would want some stranger to look after them. They would prefer the mother to stay home. I am more confident as well that way. I prefer to stay home."

Family 6
The father in this family made these comments about the leave that should be available for parents in the work force when their young children are ill. They are based on his own experiences as a parent of 3 children, several of whom had been sick during their first 5 years:

> As long as it takes. I've just spent a couple of nights in hospital with my son . . . Both - because they had asthma attacks and stuff like that and you can't really. You have to be honest with your employer as to how long it is going to take. How long you actually do spend in hospital and then you actually do try to get back on your feet again - as long as it takes. You can't say take 2 weeks off and then come back to work and the child's still sick and then you have to take another week with no pay. As long as takes - if a child is going to be in and out of hospital most of the while, it becomes a matter - what's going to happen to your child and the employee wants to keep on working or being employed - it all depends on how many children you have in the first place. If you have a number, if there's only 1, 1 parent would be able to do it and the other 1 can work. But if you have more than 1 then it's a case of you have to tell what's more acceptable.

He made these suggestions about things that would make it easier for parents in general when they have sick children: "Use what you can. Go to your employer and see what you can do."

The experiences of the case-study families illustrate how coping simultaneously with the needs of sick children and the demands of workplaces was a source of stress. When parents discussed their experiences of being in the paid work force and caring for sick children, they commented on flexible workplaces, balancing employers' and employees' needs, and/or families' financial constraints.

Seeking Paid Work

The rising unemployment rates in New Zealand in the late 1980s and early 1990s impacted on a few families in this study. Parents from a range of occupations in the public and private sectors described redundancies and short-term job seeking which occurred during this period.

Parents' descriptions of their experiences when in paid work showed some explicit references to self-esteem. One mother put it this way: "I got an enormous amount of my sense of self-worth from my paid work." Being out of paid work was also described in terms of esteem. This was apparent among a few families where problems of redundancies and job seeking persisted.

Family 6

The father in this family described considerable difficulties in the employment area. He was in paid work until his child turned 3 years, then he experienced several redundancies and periods of unemployment. His case is consistent with the trend in New Zealand in the early 1990s towards higher unemployment rates. By 1991 in this country, the labour-force participation of men aged 25 to 54 years had "declined to a post-war low of 88.5 percent" for this group of men (Krishnan, Hunter, & Goodger, 1992, p. 7).

When the father was out of paid work he became more involved in voluntary work, or unpaid work in the community: "When I became redundant I volunteered my time to. . . . It was something to fill my time in with rather than sitting at home all day. It was just to get out and do something." During the first 3 years of the child's life, when he was in full-time paid work, he did not participate in voluntary work. However, when the child was aged 3 to 5 years, he was involved with 2 community agencies, doing on average 16 hours of voluntary work each week. When the child was 5 years of age he was engaged in voluntary work for 6 to 7 hours 1 day each week and he planned to recommence further voluntary work. He had a job for a short period, but was made redundant again. He said he held off going back to the other voluntary position so that he could take care of the children while his wife did a 6-week job.

During the second follow-up interview, the father explained in greater detail his experience of having 3 young children and being in and out of paid work. He described the benefits and difficulties of being in paid work and having young children, pointing out that the good thing was having the income to meet the basic needs of the family, and the problem was the impact of the long hours of work on his contact with the children:

> [The good things were] A steady wage coming in. That includes putting food on the table, clothes on the kids' backs, and a decent place to live. [The difficulties were] Not much time spent with the kids. I was out of the house before they woke and home when they were in bed.

He made these comments about the effects of unemployment on fathers: "There's a lot of esteem, pride in having work. A lot of pride goes out the window. It's tough."

These descriptions further illustrate the impact of financial needs on families. When parents were currently in paid work, "esteem" sometimes meant individual self-worth. For parents who were out of paid work, "esteem" had come to mean pride in meeting the basic physical needs of family members.

Impact of Long Hours of Work on Families

Some parents who were in the paid work force described the effects of long hours of paid work on their families. More than a third of the 42 fathers in the original study had participated in more than 50 hours of paid work on average each week. The experiences of 4 case-study families where 1 or 2 parents spent more than 50 hours per week in paid employment show how long hours of work can place another type of pressure on families. Half of these parents working over 50 hours per week were employed in the public sector, and the other half were in the private sector or self-employed.

Family 3

The father in this family spent an average of 60 hours per week in paid work up until the child turned 2 years of age. That year he worked overseas and his hours increased to 62 per week. He moved to a new position in New Zealand when the child was aged 4 years, and from that time his hours of work gradually increased to 65 per week. He was not very satisfied with these hours: -

> [I am] reasonably dissatisfied. However, I guess it's a function of my commitment to my job, which I do treat seriously. It's a symptom of the type of job I'm in - being [names area of work] it's going through some significant change. The seniority of my position requires certain commitment.

He also described his family as reasonably dissatisfied with his hours of work because "it does preclude me being involved, particularly during the week, with any family activities. But it's a trade-off for life style". He said that the good things were "it provides a good level of income for us" and the less satisfying things were "I don't have the time during the week to do anything involved with the children". When he remembered his experiences during the child's first 5 years, the father described the benefits of being in paid work and having young children this way:

> Benefits were having the ability to fund a certain life style. The earnings were well above the average and the paid work took us to a different country. It was a chance for [the child] to experience a different culture, a different society, although there is probably very little memory in the long term.

He added that the difficulties of being in paid employment and having young children were "lack of stamina to get too involved particularly during the week". The mother in this family said that she accepted that her husband needed to be working, because members of her own profession did not earn enough.

The father was highly committed but dissatisfied. No one in the family was satisfied with his hours of work, and he described his hours as a "symptom" - usually meaning a change which is subjective evidence of the nature and location of a disease.

Other Families

The mother in a 1-parent family had spent over 50 hours per week in paid employment most years after the child turned 1 year of age. At the time of the interview her paid working hours averaged 65 per week. She explained the good things about her experiences in the work force were self-esteem and challenge: "I enjoy the intellectual challenge of what I do - work. And also I get the major part of my drive and energy from discussions with other people . . ." However, she also described some of the difficulties she experienced which related to her long hours of work. These included getting enough sleep. She said she remembered "being tired for years at a time". Another difficulty was that she could "never put in enough time" for her job. As well as this, she said that "on the other side of the balance . . . the kids never feel like they see enough of me".

The father in a 2-parent family where both of the parents were in full-time paid work for much of the child's first 5 years, had moved into working a 50-hour week when his child was aged 4 years. His main concern about his experience of being in paid work while having young children related to the total hours of work: "Working and having young children was always a bit of a worry - being 2 people working - because you're always juggling the time. It's quite difficult. So what were the good things? I would say none."

A couple who both spent over 50 hours per week in paid work described their concerns about their children needing to see more of their parents. The mother explained "sometimes the children need their mother all the time, even when they are older. Sometimes if they want me to pay attention I can't. I say I have to prepare my work." The father said it was "the traditional way" for fathers to go to work, but he added from his own experience, "of course, I think children would be better off as well if they could see their father a lot more".

Combining Study and Family Life

In the larger study of 60 families, 47 percent of the parents were studying at some point during the child's first 5 years. The case studies suggest that in 2-parent families, parents who combined full-time work and study experienced time pressures and long hours.

Family 11

Time pressures were a problem in families where both parents were in full-time paid work, and the mother or father was also studying part time. One mother who was involved in a course when the child was aged 2 to 4 years, said she "actually pulled out" part-way through the second busy year. She had found it so pressured it was hard to remember any benefits:

> There weren't really any good things [laughs]. Well, that's untrue. I think the benefits for me were I was learning about something I was interested in, but the good things as far as the family and children were concerned was that there really weren't any. [The difficulties were] time. And trying to balance 3 full-time activities. Even though it's only 1 weekend a month, it's a pretty intensive course and all except 2 of the other students were full-time students. And I was working full time and with the small children as well.

Family 10

In this family, where the father worked full time and the mother worked part time and there were 3 young children, both parents had participated in part-time study. The father, who spent around 40 hours per week in paid work throughout the child's first 5 years, was studying during the child's first, third, and fourth years of life. His study was work related, and he described the benefits of studying as "more money and promotion". However, he spoke mainly about the negative effects of his studying on family life:

> It was pretty hard at times with exams. You get pretty shitty and not nice to live with, as my wife will probably tell you. It is hard if you're trying to swot for things. You don't want people around sometimes. [The main difficulty is] grouchiness.

The mother, who was in part-time paid work after the child turned 2 years, participated in study courses throughout his first 5 years. She found that her type of study fitted in well with having young children:

> I had children while I did this training. I did playcentre training. There was no set time to complete the course. It was unlimited when I did playcentre training. I managed to get all my qualifications done in a span of 7 years. My studying was done during the day at playcentre.

She recalled that the study suited herself and her family: "It was free. It was paid for by playcentre and I ended up with recognised qualifications in early childhood training. It led me into a career." The only difficulty with her own study was lack of continuity each time a child was born: "pregnancy. I would stop and start because I had children."

In another 2-parent family where neither parent was in regular paid work, and the courses they attended were held at a polytechnic during school hours, the parents described fewer time pressures. However, they did describe trying to fit their study at home around the children's sleeping times.

Family 44

This father commenced a 2-year course of part-time study when he was a solo parent and his child was 4 years of age. He was "not happy" with the type of paid work he was doing, although he liked his working conditions as an independent contractor. At that time, he was working at his paid job for 30 hours per week, mainly during school hours. He hoped to change his career directions after completing the study course. From his experience, he believed there were benefits of studying when one had a young child, and the only difficulty was tiredness: "I found it quite good - studying - and doing my homework, he was doing his homework as well. It was quite enjoyable. Probably having to study at night - late at night [was] a bit tiring."

The need to study late at night was often the main difficulty experienced by both 1-parent and 2-parent families with young children. Balancing study, paid work, care of the children, and sleep was an issue for all these families.

Discussion

The experiences of the case-study families suggest that balancing work, study, and early childhood education was an ongoing issue affecting parents, children, other family members, and employers. The data reported here show that, consistent with Rudduck's (1993) view, qualitative research using transcriptions of tape-recorded interviews has the potential to "capture" the participants' experiences, which "speak for themselves". In this section, the information generated by the case studies is linked back to relevant literature reviewed in chapters 2 to 5, and some implications for policy and practice are noted.

Parents' Work and Early Childhood Education

The themes and meanings which linked the children's changing early childhood education experiences to changes in their parents' paid work or study suggest that parents were often trying to accommodate their own needs and their child's needs. This was evident when parents described balancing their paid work with their perceptions of their child's development, and with meeting the child's socioemotional needs. It was also apparent when parents described the Maori language experiences of the child and the adult members of the family/whanau; or their child's experiences as a member of a migrant culture when moving into an early childhood centre, and their own difficulties balancing paid work and the centre's hours.

Parents discussed meeting their children's socioemotional needs. It became clear from their descriptions that the child's emotional development/security was a focus of the experiences they described if they were in paid work during the first years. This emphasis is consistent with the findings of research on infants and toddlers in childcare centres (Podmore & Craig, 1991, 1994). Later, the child's independence and autonomy were a concern. It is appropriate to note that concepts such as dependence, independence, and autonomy have a range of meanings which tend to be culturally prescribed, and as Podmore and Bird (1991) point out, parents' ideas also vary about "timetables" or the ages at which they expect children to perform tasks independently. However, the dependence *versus* independence dimension seemed to be an important consideration for the parents in this study who were striving to co-ordinate their own paid work and their children's care and education from birth to 5 or 6 years of age.

Parents' perceptions of whether their children were "settled" at the age of around 4½ years also reflected concerns about cognitive, language, and social stimulation. These concerns are relevant to early childhood teachers. Recently Meade (1995) reports findings from case studies of children aged between 4½ and 5 years which suggest the need for more intensive stimulation of these children in early childhood centres. Action research has shown how adults can enrich 4½-year-old children's formation of cognitive structures or exploration of schemas (Meade, Cubey, Hendricks, & Wylie, 1995).

The experiences of the case-study families also support Ochiltree and colleagues' conclusions from their Australian research that mothers in paid work found it difficult juggling their own needs and their children's needs (Greenblat & Ochiltree, 1993). The findings of this study illustrate in depth the ways in which some families strive to strike a balance in this area.

Unlike Rolfe, Lloyd-Smith, and Richards' (1991) Australian findings, this study suggests that some fathers were supportive, and a few had been actively involved, in organising early care arrangements that met their infant's or young child's needs. Other fathers were less closely involved, or did not remember some difficulties described by the mothers. The descriptions of the fathers' experiences in this study highlight the importance of including fathers and other family members in research on families and work-force participation.

The impact of language maintenance is evident in 2 case studies where parents described learning Maori as an empowering experience for their children and for themselves. These experiences are consistent with reports which have documented the benefits of the kohanga reo movement (Government Review Team, 1988; Report of the Ministerial Planning Group, 1991). In 1988, the government review of Te Kohanga Reo provided strong support for the appropriateness of the kohanga reo for children aged under 5 years, for the whanau, and for Maoridom. The Review Team reported that, as well as the expected language maintenance and revival outcomes for children and families, the kohanga reo movement had revitalised Maori culture and had empowered Maori communities.

Aspects of migrants' needs are also illustrated in the case studies, which show how language acquisition, and the racism experienced in educational settings, can impact on a migrant family. The lack of peer acceptance experienced by young children from migrant families suggests a need to foster children's awareness of the issue of stereotyping. This supports the relevance of the "contribution" component of *Te Whāriki,* the current early childhood curriculum guidelines which are characterised by an ecological approach (Ministry of Education, 1993). In the guidelines, a stated goal of "contribution" is "meeting children's needs", and this example is provided: "The programme [for young children] should provide opportunities to discuss bias and to see prejudice and negative stereotyping being challenged by adults" (Ministry of Education, 1993, p.76).

Flexible Work

The data reported on flexible work and gender issues illustrate some changes which are occurring in families, and the experiences of some parents suggest a need for changes in society's attitudes. There appear to be gaps between social mores and families' experiences. The cases of fathers in part-time work, as described in this study, support the conclusions from some European studies summarised in chapter 5. For example, Pruzan (1994) reports that Danish men viewed part-time work as ideal for themselves when they have young children.

However, for other parents in this study, flexible working conditions were linked to long hours of work, which they described as impacting on family life. This finding of a connection between flexible work and long hours of work is consistent with the results of recent research in the United States which showed that new technology was leading to longer hours of work (e.g., "The Longest Day", 1994 - *see* chapter 5).

The meanings interpreted from the parents' comments show the relevance of congruence between their own and other family members' personalities/values and their work situations. The *congruence model,* described by Morf (1989) and Zedeck (1992) and discussed in chapter 2, proposes that the spheres of work and life are linked by aspects of the individual's personality. Whereas Morf's (1989) explanation of the congruence model focuses entirely on the disposition of the individual, the experiences described by these families suggest that congruence was not entirely an individualistic construct. In some 2-parent families, each parent's description of congruence appeared to be interconnected.

Parental Leave

Families' experiences of parental leave had different meanings which were linked to gender issues, financial constraints, the impact of long hours of work, and stress on employers and families. Gender-related "equality *versus* difference" issues underlay the experiences of parents who had been granted extended leave. The case studies show how some aspects of the equality and difference issues discussed by Galtry and Callister in chapter 3, are related to parents' experiences of breastfeeding and parental leave. Further complexities were evident in the parents' descriptions of the impact of financial constraints on their parental-leave experiences, which support the importance of paid parental leave to low-income families.

Employment Seeking and Long Hours of Work

This report illustrates some aspects of the effects of redundancy and job seeking on families with young children. Parents' descriptions of their experiences of paid work and of seeking work affirm that self-esteem is important in this context. The impact of redundancy on family members' esteem is accentuated by financial constraints and the difficulty of providing for children's basic needs.

The case studies also highlight the impact of long hours of paid work on families where parent/s were spending on average more than 50 hours per week on paid work. The parents' voices reported in these case studies "speak for themselves" about unemployment and long hours of work as sources of the stress experienced by families in the 1990s. The parents' descriptions of their experiences raise some questions about the extent to which policies on labour, employment, and work value families and children.

Summary

Clearly, the experiences of the case-study families show how mothers and some fathers in paid work sometimes find it difficult juggling their own needs and their children's needs. The findings of this research illustrate in depth parents' concerns and the ways in which families strive to strike a balance in work, family life, and early childhood arrangements.

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Appendix

Main Themes and Codes

1. How does children's participation in different early childhood education and care services link to changes over time in their parents' participation in paid work and other experiences? How do parents describe the meanings of these changes for children and parents?
   (Theme = diversity and change - in childcare arrangements) (RED)

2. How do flexible ways of working occur over time within families with young children? What is the impact on families of these flexible ways of working?
   (Themes = gender roles; diversity and change - in work patterns) (BLUE)

3. How do parents perceive and experience parental leave?
   (Themes = gender roles; constraints on taking up parental leave; diversity and change - consider family size and spacing, and the child's birth order here) (YELLOW)

4. How do parents describe their experiences of paid work, study, or of seeking paid work?
   (Themes = impact of long hours of paid work on families, financial constraints) (GREEN)

Categories of Meaning			Transformed Meanings
1.	div ch	diversity and change in families' work and childcare arrangements	
2.	acc ece	access to early childhood education/care	
3.	flex	the need for flexibility in work places	"congruence"
4.	imp lghrs	the impact of long hours of paid work on families	
5.	fin const	financial constraints	"esteem"/ "self-worth"
	fin parl	financial constraints on taking up parental leave	
	fin ece	financial constraints related to early childhood education and care	
6.	gend	gender roles	"equality *versus* difference"
7.	cult/migr	migrant culture experiences regarding to childcare arrangements, education, and work	migrant needs
	cult/lang	information about language and culture in relation to childcare arrangements, education, and work	language maintenance
8.	child dev	perceptions of the child's development	dependence/security versus independence/autonomy cognitive, language, social stimulation

CHAPTER 7

PARTNERED MOTHERS' PARTICIPATION IN PAID WORK: NEW ZEALAND, SWEDEN, AND THE UNITED STATES

Paul Callister

Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed snapshot from the New Zealand 1991 census of the participation in paid work of mothers in 2-parent families with preschool and school-age children, along with some international comparisons.[61] [62] [63] Mothers in 2-parent families are focused on for 2 main reasons. Firstly, in New Zealand, despite major growth since the mid-1970s in sole-parent families over the whole population of parents of children under 16, three-quarters of families have 2 parents living in the same household. Yet breaking down family type and participation in paid work in families with children under 5, by Maori and non-Maori ethnic group, as shown in table 7 in the appendix, illustrates that narrowing the focus means excluding a significant proportion of Maori parents. A similar situation would occur for Pacific Island families.[64] But the participation in paid work by sole parents in New Zealand, broken down by main ethnic groupings, has already been analysed in detail (Rochford, 1993). However, an additional reason for excluding sole parents from this current analysis is that their participation in paid work is considerably lower than in 2-parent families, particularly before children reach school age.

In this chapter the ethnicity of both the mother and father is considered, as earlier work has identified some marked differences between families where 1 parent is Maori and those where both parents are Maori (Davey & Callister, 1994). Three ethnic groups are used - Maori, Pacific Island, and the remaining group, "other".[65] The linkage between paid work and care of children is a particularly important issue for Maori and Pacific Island mothers. Pacific Island women have higher fertility rates than Maori or "other" women, and Pacific Island and Maori women begin childbearing at a younger age. In addition, Maori and Pacific Island women are more concentrated in the childbearing ages than "other" women. In 1991, 46 percent of Pacific Island women were in the 20-34 age group, as against 43 percent of Maori women and 29 percent of "other" women (Statistics New Zealand, 1994).

In each section comparisons are also made with paid-work patterns of partnered mothers in the United States and Sweden. The reasons for choosing these 2 countries for comparison are set out in chapter 1. However, it should be noted that in making these comparisons, while using the late 1980s and early 1990s allows some time consistency, the countries chosen were in quite different phases of economic growth. In particular, for New Zealand this period represents a recent high point in unemployment, whereas for Sweden this period was a relatively high point in terms of employment. In recent times the trends in employment in Sweden and New Zealand have reversed, with employment in New Zealand growing and employment in Sweden declining.[66][67] Finally, it must be emphasised that most of the data presented in this chapter provide a snapshot of both family type and participation in paid work at a particular point of time. As illustrated in chapter 3, patterns are very fluid, particularly in terms of movement by mothers in and out of paid work.

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[61] Under 16 years of age.

[62] The way census data are collected and coded allows 2-parent families in which one parent is male and the other female to be identified. It does not enable parents of the same sex to be identified.

[63] Census data on unpaid work are limited. However, what data are available are discussed in Callister and Davey (forthcoming).

[64] A detailed breakdown of all family types, including sole parents and labour-market participation, for preschool and school-age children is also contained in the appendix in table 8.

[65] Ethnic definitions are based on the concept of cultural affiliation.

The Early Months of a Child's Life

New Zealand

While not a longitudinal survey, potentially the 5-yearly census gives an accurate count of the number of partnered mothers who are in paid work by age of their youngest child from the time of birth. This is because in 1991 the date of birth was recorded. However, the wording of the question regarding paid work creates some problems in relation to a mother's possibly taking parental leave. In the 1991 census, people were asked whether they worked in a job, and how many hours they had worked in the last week. But, if they had not actually worked in the previous week, they were asked to put their usual hours. It is difficult to assess how people on parental leave would have answered this question. It is possible they would say they are in paid work and state their usual hours before starting the parental leave. If this is the case, then the number of mothers who are actually back working in paid work, and not on some form of leave, including parental leave, will be overstated.

According to the 1991 census, 11 percent of partnered mothers with a child under 1 month old were in full-time paid work, and a further 11 percent in part-time work.[68] Figure 1 shows how both the proportion working full time and part time rises steadily over the first 2 years of a child's life, with part-time work increasing at a slightly faster rate to reach 21 percent at 12 months and 25 percent at 2 years, while the full-time figures are 14 percent and 17 percent respectively. This pattern gives no indication that women are taking some standard period of parental leave, say 3 months, or perhaps a year, and then returning to their place of paid work.

As discussed in the literature review covering breastfeeding, it has been argued that for women who wish to combine breastfeeding and paid work outside the home then one way is to work 20 hours or less per week in the first 6 months. In 1991, 8 percent of partnered mothers with a child under 1 month were in paid work of less than 20 hours per week, rising to 13 percent at 6 months. In comparison, the proportion of mothers who worked 40 or more hours per week, the norm for most fathers, with a child under 1 month, was 8 percent, rising to 9 percent at 6 months, 11 percent at a year, and 12 percent at 2 years.

It is also interesting to compare the profiles of mothers and fathers with a child under 1 year of age who work long hours in their paid work. Of those mothers working 50 or more hours per week, 88 percent had a partner working 40 or more hours, and 71 percent a partner working 50 or more hours per week. But for fathers who worked 50 or more hours per week, only 12 percent had a partner who worked 40 or more hours, and just over 6 percent a partner who also worked 50 or more hours per week.

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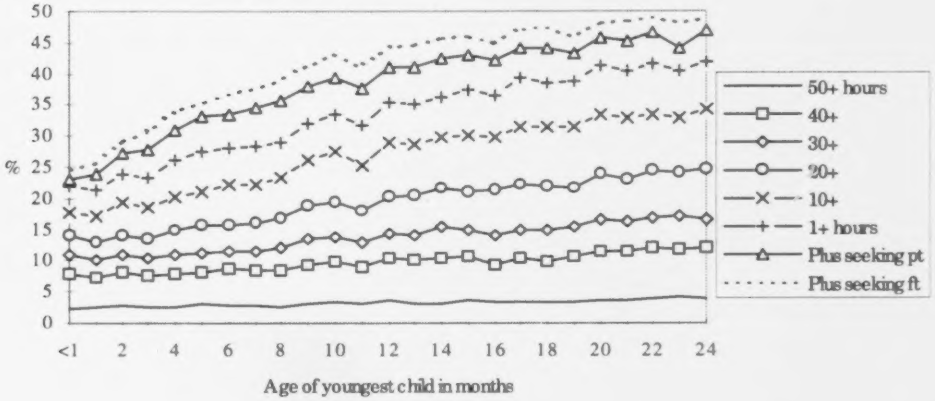
[66] There were also differences in the age structure of the population between these countries. In 1991, 23.2 percent of the New Zealand population was under 15, as against 21.9 percent in the United States, and 18.3 percent in Sweden (Statistics New Zealand, 1995).

[67] It should also be noted that in making these comparisons there will be some differences in data collection methodologies and definitions between the 3 countries which may have some effects on the results. Where these differences are known they are noted.

[68] In New Zealand full-time paid work is classified as 30 or more hours per week.

Figure 1

Partnered Mothers' Participation in the Labour Force - Hours per Week
by Age of Youngest Child - 1991



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Census

In a United States context, Klerman and Leibowitz (1994) argue that as women's time away from the labour force has shrunk, understanding the changes in behaviour *within* the first year after the birth has become more important.[69] However, they go on to suggest that conventional labour-force-participation measures are misleading, as many women with very young children are employed, and thus labour-force participants, but not actually back at paid work.

In New Zealand, data taken from the question regarding the person's main means of travel to work on the day of the census, a Tuesday in March, suggest that a high proportion of mothers, particularly those stating they are in full-time work, may in fact be on parental leave. Over all, 7.6 percent of women aged 15 and over, in full-time paid work, stated they "did not go to work today". But 52 percent of partnered mothers in full-time paid work with a child under 1 month did not go to work. At 1 month the figure is 41 percent, 2 months 32 percent, and 3 months 27 percent. The differences are not so marked for part-time paid work.

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[69] This study covers all mothers, not just those with partners.

Mothers with university qualifications who had a child under 1 month were far more likely to be in paid work than mothers with no qualifications, regardless of whether it was full-time or part-time paid work (Callister, 1995). However, as indicated, some of these women, particularly those working full time, may have been on parental leave, as Klerman and Leibowitz (1994) found that women with high levels of training were more likely than other women to be employed, but not actually at work, in the early months of a child's life.

The occupational profiles of mothers with children under 3 months of age who were in paid work, when compared with all women in paid work, also showed up some important differences. For mothers with young children, the profile was skewed towards occupations which generally require higher levels of formal education such as managerial and professional, but also towards those in agricultural and fishery occupations (Callister, 1995). Agriculture and fisheries categories include farmers, an occupation where there may be greater scope for combining childcare and paid work than many other occupations.

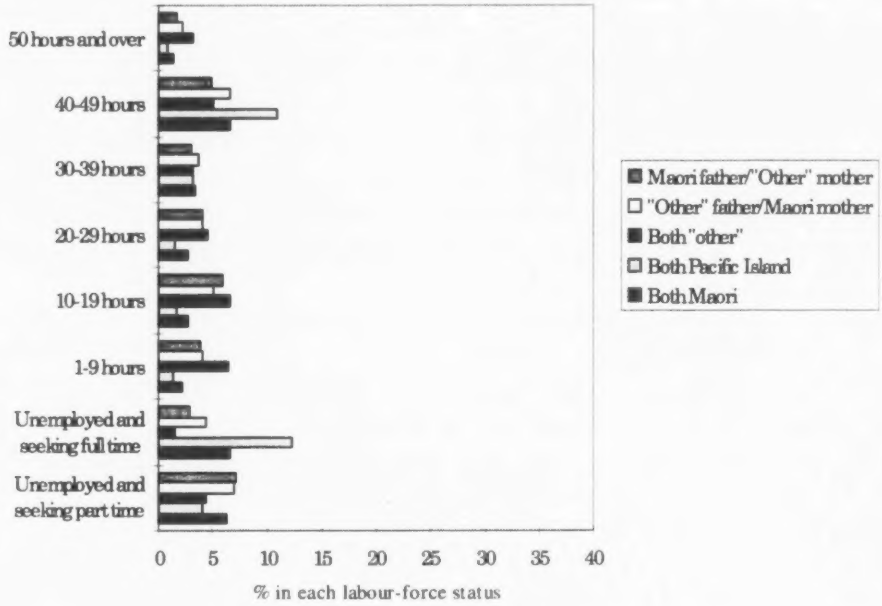
The overrepresentation of professional and managerial mothers may be due to a number of factors. Such mothers may have better access to on-site creches, they may be in families which are in a better position to afford childcare, they may have more liberal attitudes towards roles for women, or they may be more career oriented than women in other types of occupations. Some of them may also be in "key" positions, and under the New Zealand parental-leave legislation, their jobs may not be held open by employers beyond 4 weeks.

The 1991 census data showed that the overrepresentation of employed mothers in managerial and professional occupations was also linked into their age characteristics. The proportion of mothers with a child under 1 year who were in paid work increased with the age of the mother, although it dropped sharply for mothers who were 50 or more years of age. In addition, in the 40-plus age group, women were more likely to work full time rather than part time.

There were, however, in the first year of a child's life some ethnic differences in actual hours of paid work.

Figure 2

Hours of Paid Work of Mothers by Ethnicity of Both Parents - Youngest Child under 1 - 1991



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Census

Note: There were insufficient data in the other groupings, such as Pacific Island father/ Maori mother, to provide such a detailed breakdown. In addition, this figure is drawn on the same scale as figure 8 to allow comparisons to be made as the age of the youngest child increases.

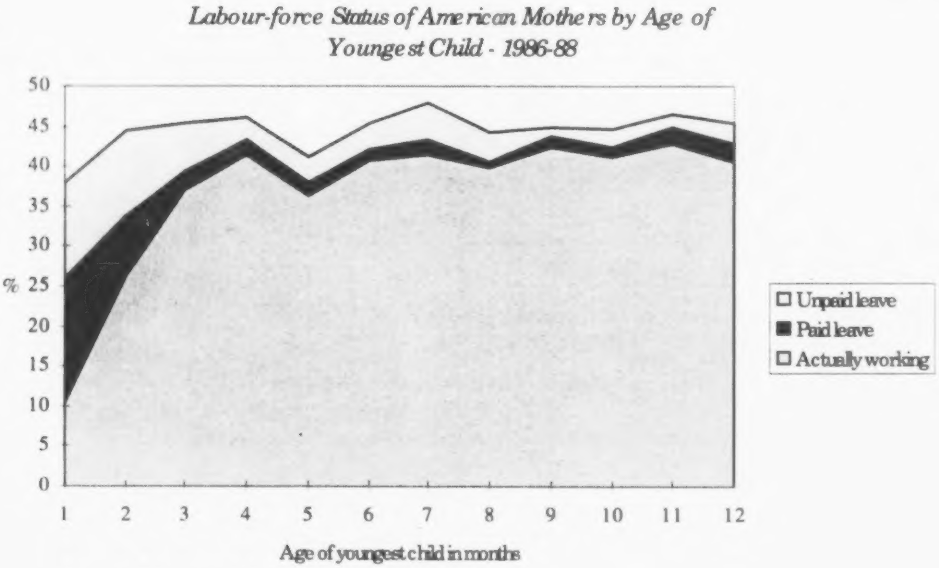
Figure 2 shows the 5 most common ethnic combinations within 2-parent families. A number of patterns stand out from this figure. A higher proportion of Pacific Island mothers were either looking for full-time paid work or in the 40-49 hours subgroup of full-time paid work than mothers from Maori or "other" ethnic groups. Few mothers of families where both parents are "other" were looking for full-time paid work, but when they did work full time a higher percentage worked 50 or more hours per week. Mothers from this group were also more likely to work part time than Maori or Pacific Island mothers. Over all, mothers from the "other" group were the most likely to be in paid work, and mothers from families where both parents were Maori or both Pacific Island the least likely to be in paid work when the youngest child was under 1 year of age. This is likely to reflect a number of factors including age and educational qualifications.

The United States

In the United States a much higher proportion of mothers are in paid work in the first year of a child's life, with a significant proportion of these women being back at work within weeks of the birth.

Using Current Population Surveys for 1986-88 Klerman and Leibowitz (1994) show that, while 38 percent of the mothers were counted as employed, 10 percent of women who were in paid work before pregnancy were actually back at their paid workplace 1 month following delivery.[70] The percentage of women actually back at the workplace, however, rises rapidly to over 35 percent within 3 months of childbirth and more than 40 percent by 4 months. Unlike New Zealand, in the United States, from 4 months on in the first 2 years of a child's life, there are few new returnees to the labour force.

Figure 3



Source: Klerman & Leibowitz (1994)

Klerman and Leibowitz also found that almost all women who are in paid work when their child is 12 months old remain continuously employed. They argue that women's work behaviour can be characterised as nearly all or nothing; either they keep the job held before the child's birth and return to work quickly, or they do not work at all in the year following the birth.

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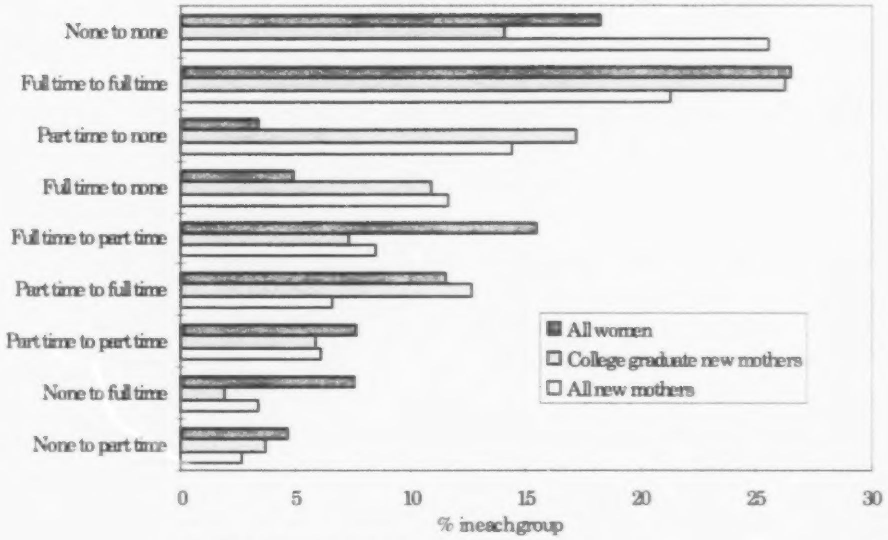
[70] These data cover both sole and partnered mothers.

The data, however, do not give hours of paid work on return. This information is given by other research by Klerman and Leibowitz (1993) which provides estimates of job continuity showing labour-force status 12 months before the birth of a child and 6 months after and is compared with all women with an interval of 18 months. The effect of education shows up clearly in that college graduates are more likely to return to full-time work within 6 months after the birth of a child.

Figure 4

Predicted Continuity in Paid Work of New Mothers and All Women in the United States - 1990



Source: Klerman and Leibowitz (1993)

Note: Full-time paid work in the United States is defined as 35 hours or more per week.

Klerman (1993) uses empirical estimates drawn from the National Longitudinal Survey - Youth to show also that in 1990 most women who were in paid work throughout pregnancy returned to work relatively quickly after the birth. The modal time to return to work occurred about 6 weeks after childbirth. He suggests that about a third of all women do not work at all during pregnancy, a third quit their jobs during pregnancy, and a third retain some connection with their employer through childbirth. These pre-birth patterns appear to influence the return to paid work. Over all it is predicted that just under 10 percent of American mothers will be back at paid work within a week of giving birth.

Table 1

Rate of Return of New Mothers to Paid Work in Relationship to When They Left Paid Work During Pregnancy

Weeks after birth	All women	Not in paid work	Week 1-week 13 in pregnancy	Week 14-week 26	Week 27-week 38	Worked up to delivery
	Percentage		returned	to	work	
1	8	0	1	1	13	18
2	10	0	2	2	15	21
3	12	1	3	4	18	25
4	14	2	4	6	21	29
6	21	3	8	10	32	40
8	31	5	13	16	48	56
10	37	7	17	22	58	65
12	41	10	21	26	62	70
14	44	11	24	29	66	74
16	46	13	26	32	69	76
18	48	14	29	34	70	78
20	49	15	30	36	72	79
26	53	19	36	41	75	83
39	60	27	47	52	81	88
52	65	33	54	59	85	91
65	69	39	61	66	88	93
78	72	44	66	70	90	95
91	75	48	70	74	91	96
104	77	51	73	77	93	97

Source: Klerman (1993)

Sweden

In contrast to both New Zealand and the United States, while a very high proportion of Swedish mothers are still employed in paid work, few were actually back in their paid workplace in the early months of a child's life. This appears to be substantially influenced by the provision of paid parental leave. In 1989-90 nearly all mothers (98 percent) took paid parental leave. During the child's first year, nearly half (44 percent) took more than 271 days, while a third took between 181 and 270 days, with an average of 262 days (European Commission, 1994). Research by Sundström (1993) on 1 large employer suggests that it is extremely rare for a mother to return from parental leave within 100 days of taking leave. She suggests the payment structure for parental leave influences the timing of the return to paid work, with peak returns at 180 days, 270 days, and 360 days.

However, there are variations in the timing of return to paid work amongst Swedish women. Näsman (1990) indicates that in 1988, on an averaged basis across the year, 12 percent of partnered mothers and 6 percent of single mothers were back in paid work in the child's first year of life. Stafford and Sundström (1994) suggest there is a tendency for the better paid and more educated women to return to work sooner. Older women also returned sooner, but Sundström (1993) hypothesises that this may not be due to increased levels of human capital through work experience, but rather that these women already had younger children and therefore had priority for a place in public childcare. Sundström (1993) also notes that, unlike women in the United States, Swedish women who had previously worked part time did not have a lower probability of returning to full-time work at the end of a period of parental leave than those who had previously worked full time. In addition, in a pattern which may be unique to Sweden, some women return briefly for a period of full-time work, usually after 6 months' leave, then resume parental leave. In these situations the fathers will generally be taking a period of parental leave. Over all, Sundström and Stafford (1992) suggest an increasing proportion of women, both those having a first birth and women having higher order births, are working continuously full time (they remain classified as working full time while on parental leave). Sundström and Stafford (1992) note that Swedish patterns of fertility are very different from those in the United States where fertility is higher among younger women, and childbearing is likely to result in lower lifetime career attainment. Sweden also stands out from New Zealand and the United States in its unique combination of high rates of breastfeeding (*see* chapter 3) and high level of attachment of mothers to the labour force. In Sweden, a situation has evolved where in the first year of a child's life Swedish mothers exhibit unique features of both "equality" and "difference".

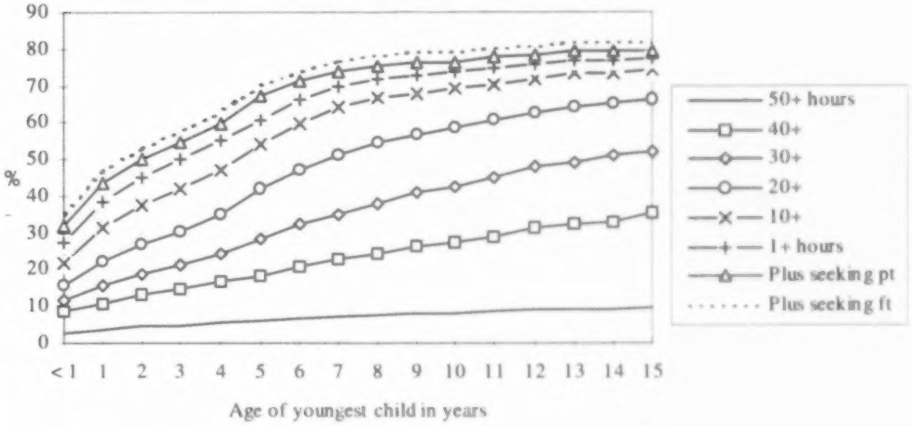
Mothers' Patterns of Paid Work When Children Are 1-15 Years of Age

New Zealand

Figure 5 on p. 178 shows changing patterns of labour-force participation by partnered mothers in New Zealand from the time a child is born through to its reaching 15 years of age. Overall labour-force participation increases until the children reach 8, and from this time on the growth in full-time work is compensated by a decline in part-time work. The transition to school at the age of 5 does not appear to have a major overall effect, although there was a slight pickup in the proportion of mothers wanting to work part time. After the age of 6, the proportion of mothers working 1-9 hours started to decline, the decline in those working 10-19 hours starting after the youngest child reached 7, while the decline in those working 20-29 hours per week started after the age of 8.

Figure 5

Partnered Mothers' Participation in the Labour Force - Hours per Week by Age of Youngest Child - 1991



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Census

The proportion of partnered mothers in full-time work, that is 30 or more hours per week, increased steadily throughout the whole period. However, even by the time the youngest child reaches the age of 15, only 52 percent of partnered women worked full time, 35 percent 40 or more hours per week, and just under 10 percent 50 hours or more. As a comparison, 74 percent of partnered fathers with a child under 1 year worked 40 or more hours per week, rising to 80 percent with a child in the 5-15 age group. In addition, with a child under 1 year, 30 percent of partnered fathers worked 50 or more hours per week, rising to 35 percent in the 5-15 age group. The chart emphasises the very long-term impact of having children on most women's paid work. This is of course just a snapshot at each age. However, longitudinal data by Lloyd, Fergusson, and Horwood (1990) indicate that a significant number of women may not sustain long-term full-time jobs, while the more recent work of Podmore (1994) also shows few mothers working the hours typical of fathers.

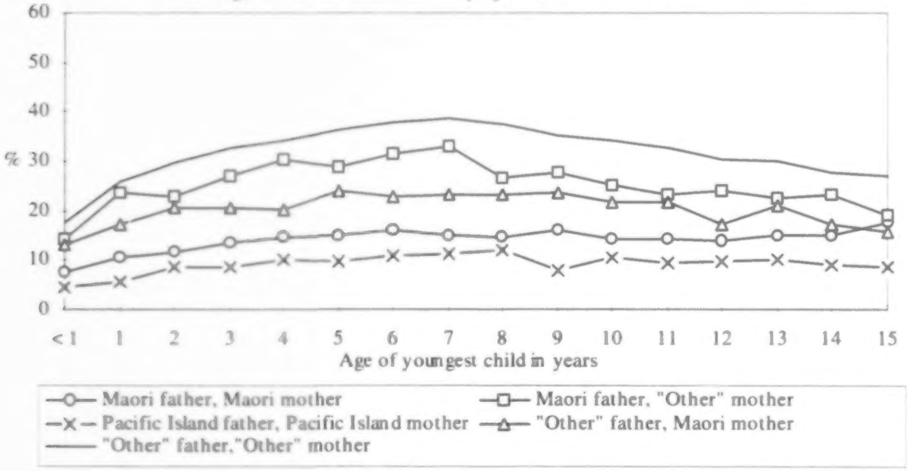
New Zealand census data (Statistics New Zealand, 1994) indicate a complex interrelationship between mothers' participation in paid work with having preschool children. The characteristics and attitudes of the mother are important, as are how these fit with those of the partner. However, partners will often have similar characteristics in terms of level of education, broad ethnic group, and age (Statistics New Zealand, 1994; Davey & Callister, 1994). An important factor is education. Data show that mothers with no qualifications or those still at school had the lowest level of participation in paid work, and those with university qualifications or who have trained as teachers or nurses the highest (Statistics New Zealand, 1994). While the mother's qualification had a major influence, the father's qualification also influenced decisions. The highest proportion of mothers in full-time paid work were those with university qualifications whose partners have no formal qualifications, although this represents a relatively small group of parents. The lowest participation was amongst mothers who have no qualifications and whose partner has "other" tertiary qualifications, which include trade qualifications.

The proportion of mothers with school-age children in full-time paid work was strongly influenced by the mother's qualification, with the qualification of the father appearing to have little influence. A more complex picture emerges with part-time work for mothers with school-age children. The highest level of part-time work was to be found when fathers have a university qualification and mothers have an "other" tertiary qualification. This "other" category includes trades training as well as nursing and teaching. Once children attend school the age of the mother still seemed to be associated with slightly different patterns of full-time and part-time work. Mothers between 30 and 44 were more likely to work part time.

Ethnicity of mothers appeared to have a significant influence on whether mothers work part time, with "other" mothers most likely to have been in part-time paid work. This links in with the age of the mother, as "other" mothers tended to be older on average than Maori or Pacific Island mothers at any given age of a child.

Figure 6

Partnered Mothers' Participation in Part-time Paid Work by Age of Youngest Child and Ethnicity of Both Parents - 1991

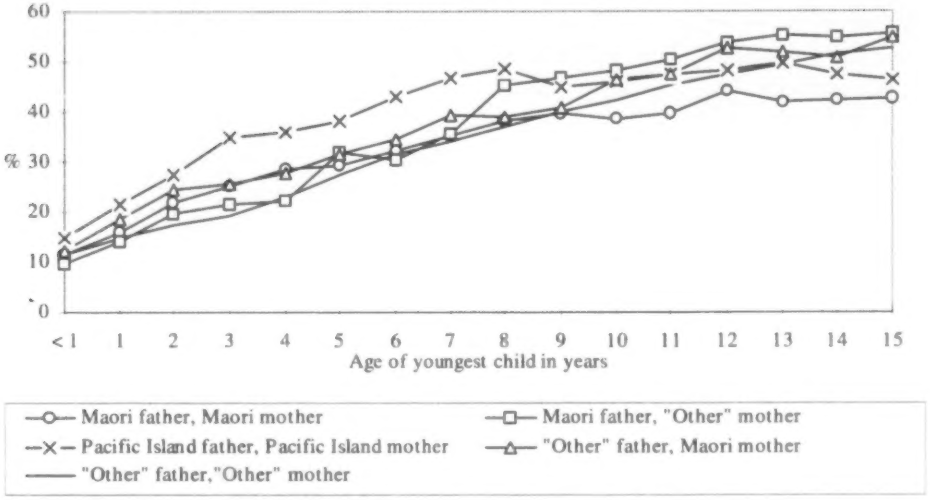


Source: Statistics New Zealand, Census

The pattern of full-time work also varied but not by so much. In particular, Pacific Island mothers were more likely to work full time when children are in their early years, but their participation rate stays relatively static in later years while "other" mothers, and Maori mothers with "other" fathers, kept increasing their participation rates.

Figure 7

Partnered Mothers' Participation in Full-time Paid Work by Age of Youngest Child and Ethnicity of Both Parents - 1991



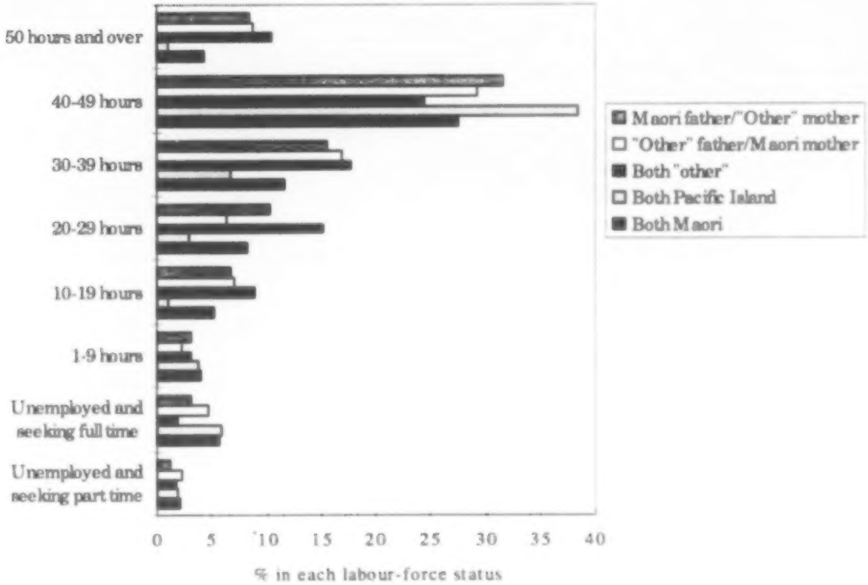
Source: Statistics New Zealand, Census

Although Pacific Island and Maori women were more likely to work full time, over all "other" mothers, whether with "other" fathers or Maori fathers, had the highest participation rates in paid work, particularly in the latter years of children's being at school. The lowest rates were by Pacific Island women with Pacific Island men, and by Maori women with Maori men.

But within the broad categories of full-time and part-time work, just as was the situation with mothers of under 1-year-olds, there were variations in the actual hours worked by mothers of different ethnic groups through all the age groups of their youngest child. For example, Pacific Island mothers with a child aged 15 were concentrated in the 40-49 hour group of full-time workers, rather than the 30-39 or 50+ hour groups, a pattern which showed up at all age groups of children.

Figure 8

Hours of Paid Work of Mothers by Ethnicity of Both Parents - Youngest Child 15 - 1991



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Census

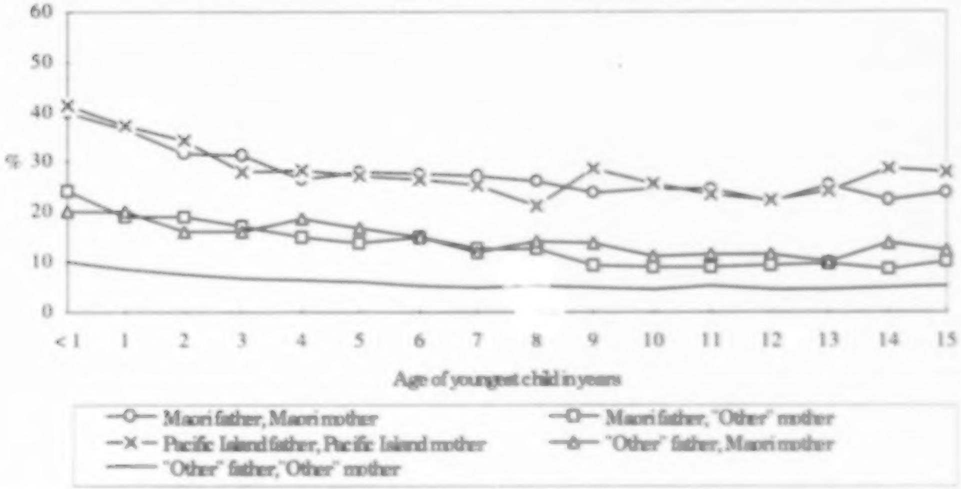
Note: This figure is drawn on the same scale as figure 2 to allow comparisons to be made as the age of the youngest child increases.

In terms of looking at the paid work of both parents, "dual career" families, where both parents work more than 40 hours per week, were still rare in New Zealand in 1991 with less than 10 percent of all ethnic groupings in this category when children were under 1 year, and over all under a third of families were in this work arrangement even when children were in the latter years of school. Because of Pacific Island women's propensity to work full time, this arrangement was slightly more common amongst Pacific Island families when children were young.

But in 1991, at the opposite end of the work spectrum, were the families where neither parent was in paid work. A very clear pattern emerges here. The families most likely to be in this situation were where both parents were Pacific Island or both Maori, and with very young children. The proportion dropped by about a half if 1 parent only was Maori, and dropped again by about half if both parents were "other".

Figure 9

Percentage of 2-parent Families Where Neither Parent is in Paid Work by Ethnicity of Parents and Age of Youngest Child - 1991



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Census

The United States

Nakamura and Shaw (1994) argue that in the United States most women are either persistent workers or nonworkers, and the period surrounding the birth of a first child provides crucial information on this heterogeneity. Women who return to work shortly after the birth of a first child are considerably more likely to be workers throughout much of their adult lives. In addition, patterns of work behaviour tend to be initiated prior to marriage and continue into the married years. They suggest that in the 1980s most women had become continuous workers. Among the women who are not continuously workers or nonworkers, those with some work history prior to having children seem to return gradually to work as their children age. "Misplaced Panics" (1995) picks up this idea of being continuous workers and argues that the biggest change in employment patterns of Americans over the past 2 decades is not that work has suddenly become insecure as many people suggest but that so many women have for the first time come to have safe long-term jobs. However, Hayghe and Bianchi (1994) show that although a significant number of married mothers are in paid work when children are in their preschool years, under a third work the pattern which is the norm for men, that is full year, full time. When children are at school, still under half are working full time, full year. Although directly comparable data are not available from New Zealand, it appears that American mothers' participation in long-term, full-time jobs is considerably higher than is the case for New Zealand mothers.

Table 2

Paid Work Experience of American Married Mothers in 1992 - Youngest Child Under 3 and 6 to 17

Paid work status	Age of youngest child	
	Under 3	6 to 17
Full year, full time	27.7	42.6
Full year, part time	8.6	12.6
Part year, full time		
40-49 weeks	5.6	4.2
27-39 weeks	3.4	2.7
1-26 weeks	6.2	4.3
Part year, part time		
40-49 weeks	3.1	3.6
27-39 weeks	2.8	2.8
1-26 weeks	9.4	5.5
Did no paid work in 1992	33.4	21.6

Source: Hayghe & Bianchi (1994)

Note: Full time 35 hours per week, full year 50 to 52 weeks per year.

Within these overall patterns there were some ethnic differences. Black women were more likely to be in the paid work force, and to work full time, and full year, than white or Hispanic mothers.

Table 3

Paid Work Experience of Mothers and Fathers in 2-parent Families with Dependent Children - 1992

Paid-work status of both parents	Age of youngest child	
	Under 6	6-17
Both parents worked year round, full time	24.3	34.3
Father worked year round, full time, mother worked	28.6	27.8
Mother worked year round, full time, father worked	5.1	6.3
Both worked but not full time year round	7.0	6.4
Father only worked	31.0	19.6
Mother only worked	2.1	3.5
Neither parent in paid work during the year	1.9	2.0

Source: Hayghe & Bianchi (1994)

Although there is considerable literature in the United States on the "dual career" family, these data indicate that families where both parents are committed to year-round, full-time jobs, are still in the minority.

Sweden

While a very high proportion of Swedish mothers are employed but not back at their paid workplace in the first year of a child's life, in subsequent years their actual participation in paid work jumps substantially. As discussed in other sections, this is assisted by a comprehensive childcare policy, as well as policies directed at more equal sharing of household work, and until recently a workable commitment to full employment. In addition, unlike New Zealand, as children get older, single mothers' participation in paid work has not been significantly lower than that of partnered mothers. However, data show that, while participation rates are high for mothers, their hours of paid work, on average, are significantly lower than those of fathers. With recent increasing unemployment in Sweden, and with particular cutbacks in government services where female employment is concentrated, it is possible that the comparatively high participation rates for women will decline, although some commentators argue that, as in New Zealand, the economic restructuring will tend firstly to remove mainly full-time male jobs in manufacturing ("Nordic Countries Survey," 1994).

Table 4

Swedish Parents' Participation in Paid Work - 1988

Family type	Age of youngest child	Percentage employed	Percentage of those employed back at paid work	Percentage absent from work	Average hours of paid work per week
Partnered man with child	< 1	95	89	11	42
	1-3	97	92	8	42
	4-6	97	96	4	43
	7-11	96	95	5	43
	12-16	96	93	7	44
Partnered man without children	-	87	91	9	41
Single men	-	69	89	11	39
Partnered woman with child	< 1	77	15	85	34
	1-3	84	82	18	28
	4-6	87	89	11	31
	7-11	91	92	8	31
	12-16	93	91	9	34
Partnered woman without children	-	81	89	11	34
Single women with children	< 1	69	9	91	20
	1-3	75	77	23	29
	4-6	86	84	16	31
	7-11	90	86	14	34
	12-16	93	89	11	34
Single women without children	-	66	89	11	34

Source: Pettersson (1988) cited in Näsman (1990)

The high participation rates by women flow through to employment combinations in 2-parent families. The pattern of the father being the sole income earner is significantly lower in Sweden, and in the early years of a child's life the main pattern is that of the father working full time and the mother working part time.

Table 5

Combination of Hours in Paid Work for Partnered Parents by Age of Youngest Child - 1987 and 1991

Age of youngest child	Man full time, woman part time	Both parents full time	Man full time, woman not in paid work	Other combinations
Swedish children	%	%	%	%
0-3	46	25	19	10
4-6	53	28	13	6
New Zealand children*				
0-1	15	8	53	24
1-4	25	13	40	22
0-4	22	12	43	23

* New Zealand 1991 census data reworked to Swedish base of full time being 35 or more hours per week: Swedish data from Pettersson (1988) cited in Näsman (1990). The age of starting school in New Zealand is 5 versus 7 in Sweden.

Näsman and Falkenberg (1990) cite 1988 data on the proportion of 2-parent families in which both parents work 41 hours or more per week. When children are under 3 years of age only 1 per cent of families worked these hours. By the time children were in the 12-16 age group this had risen to 4 percent. As a rough comparison with New Zealand, in 1991 in 7 percent of families with a child under the age of 1 year both parents worked 40 or more hours per week. This rose to nearly 11 percent in the 1-4 age group, and 23 percent in 5-15. These tables indicate that while there have been more 2-income families in Sweden, where New Zealand families have both parents in paid work they are more likely to work longer hours.

Finally, through a 1994 international survey of society's attitudes towards gender roles, it is possible to contrast attitudes to mothers being in paid work between Sweden and New Zealand, as against the actual participation rates which have already been discussed (Gendall & Russell, 1995; Edlund, Sundström, & Svallfors, 1994). Table 6 illustrates that while considerably fewer people in Sweden feel that mothers should stay at home, still a minority in both countries feel that mothers should work full time either before or after a child starts school.

Table 6

Attitudes To Mothers and Paid Work - Sweden and New Zealand - Percentage Who Agree

Do you think that women should work outside the home full time, part time, or not at all in the following circumstances?	Full time	Part time	Stay at home
	%	%	%
New Zealand - With a child under school age	2	27	63
Sweden - With a child under school age	8	57	27
New Zealand - After the youngest child starts school	12	74	7
Sweden - After the youngest child starts school	24	64	3

Source: Gendall & Russell, 1995; Edlund, Sundström, & Svallfors, 1994

Notes: The cannot-choose category is not shown. The official definition of full-time work in Sweden is 35 or more hours per week, while in New Zealand it is 30 or more hours, although respondents made up their own minds as to what they thought was full-time paid work. In addition, the age of starting school in New Zealand is 5 versus 7 in Sweden.

Conclusion

There are both similarities and differences between partnered mothers' patterns of paid work in New Zealand, the United States, and Sweden. The main similarity is that, for most women, having a child still leads to patterns of work quite different from that of most fathers, sometimes for only a short period but for many mothers throughout the child's school life. However, in the late 1980s and early 1990s there were also major differences between the experiences of mothers in the 3 countries. Over all, mothers in Sweden had by far the highest participation rate in paid work, but with very few actually back in their paid workplaces when children are under 6 months old. At the other end of the spectrum, a significant proportion of American mothers were back at paid work within 4 months of the birth, but their overall attachment rates were lower than Swedish women. New Zealand mothers' patterns of participation in paid work when children are young were lower than those found in both Sweden and the United States but more are back at paid work in the first 6 months than Swedish mothers. But within national populations there is also considerable diversity of patterns of paid work for mothers, both within family and between family types. As discussed in chapter 1, social policies and norms, amongst a wide range of factors, affect mothers' participation in paid work, and there is considerable debate about future trends. For example, in the United States, Hayghe and Bianchi (1994) suggest that participation rates have now stabilised, while Briar (1995) suggests that participation rates have levelled off in most age groups and most countries. The very high participation rates of Swedish mothers must also be under pressure with the current recession in Sweden. Yet in New Zealand, if our labour market and social trends follow those of the United States, there would appear to be the potential for considerable growth in the participation in paid work by mothers of young children. However, in the long term increased participation of mothers in paid work will depend on the many intersecting issues raised in this report such as men's involvement in childcare, the provision of high-quality affordable childcare, attitudes within society and workplaces, and last, but not least, the ability of an economy to provide paid work for all those who want it.

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Appendix

Table 7

Family Types and Patterns of Work for Maori and Non-Maori Families - Youngest Child under 5 - 1991

	Total %	Maori * %	Non-Maori* %
Two parent - Father in paid work, mother not in paid work	35.5	14.1	35.4
Two parent - Mother in paid work, father not in paid work	2.1	2.1	1.7
Two parent - Both in paid work	28.4	9.5	28.6
Two parent - Neither in paid work	9.8	13.5	7.4
One parent - Mother in paid work	2.8	4.7	2.4
One parent - Mother not in paid work	18.9	49.8	13.7
One parent - Father in paid work	1.0	1.6	0.9
One parent - Father not in paid work	1.5	4.7	1.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 1991 Census - Unpublished data (Statistics New Zealand, 1994: Chapter 4)

* In Maori 2-parent families *both* parents are Maori, and in the sole-parent families the parent identified is Maori. For non-Maori families in the 2-parent families *neither* parent is Maori, and in the sole-parent families the parent is non-Maori. This table therefore excludes 2-parent families where only 1 parent is Maori.

Table 8

Family Type and Participation in Paid Work in New Zealand
Percentage in each Family Type by Age of Youngest Child - 1991

Family type	Age of youngest child Under 5 %	 5-15 %
Two-parent family - Father full time, mother not in paid work	34.3	14.1
Sole mother not in paid work	18.9	13.1
Two-parent family - Father full time, mother part time	16.1	20.5
Two-parent family - Both in full-time paid work	11.1	28.0
Two-parent family - Neither in paid work	9.8	5.6
Sole father - Not in paid work	1.5	2.6
Sole mother - Full-time paid work	1.4	4.9
Sole mother - Part-time paid work	1.3	3.0
Two-parent family - Father part time, mother not in paid work	1.3	0.7
Two-parent family - Father not in paid work, mother full time	1.2	1.9
Sole father - Full-time paid work	0.9	2.4
Two-parent family - Father not in paid work, mother part time	0.9	1.2
Two-parent family - Both part time	0.6	0.8
Two-parent family - Father part time, mother full time	0.5	1.0
Sole father - Part-time paid work	0.1	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0
Total (n)	192,910	217,783

Source: Statistics New Zealand, Census.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

Paul Callister, Valerie N. Podmore, Judith Galtry, and Theresa Sawicka

This chapter draws together a brief synthesis of the information presented in chapters 2 to 7. A summary is provided of some of the main findings on parental leave, parents and paid work, related early childhood education issues, and flexible workplaces and work practices. Finally, some questions are raised for further discussion.

Summary of Issues

Society and Family Policies

- Discussions about families, work, and education are strongly influenced by sociocultural contexts. This report, which draws on a range of theoretical views and includes an "ecological" perspective, has endeavoured to discuss the research within its appropriate sociocultural, political, and economic contexts.

- The report also draws on several models of work and family life, including the concept of "public *versus* private spheres". Sweden and the United States provide contrasting models regarding the role of the state, employers, and the family, in the resolution of potential conflicts between paid work and family life. In the United States, work and family issues are considered to be primarily the private responsibility of individual family members. In addition, employers are at times encouraged to develop programmes voluntarily, to resolve any potential conflicts. In the United States, the government has fewer obligations to provide benefits which support family life, and tends not to intervene in decision making within households. In contrast, successive Swedish governments have been actively involved in economic and social areas, including an interest in the workings of households. Moreover in Sweden, in contrast to the United States, there has been an interest in equality, not only of outcomes between women and men, but also among all people in society. In Sweden, government policy has played a major role in trying to resolve any conflicts between work and family life, with less responsibility on the employers to take on this role.

Parental Leave

- Concepts of "equality" and "difference" in relation to women and men and patterns of work, both paid and unpaid, vary between industrialised countries, and have changed over time. These concepts are potentially problematic in dealing with differences within groups of women and of men, and therefore, at times, between various women and men. Nevertheless they are an integral, if at times implicit, part of the debates around the provision and design of parental-leave policies.

- Parental-leave polices at a national level can have a significant impact on the patterns of paid and unpaid work of women, especially in the first weeks or months following the birth of a child. However, while these polices have the potential to influence men's patterns of work, the impact in most countries has been insignificant.

- The extent to which parental-leave policies have an impact on the lives of women and men also depends on a range of other related national policies, in particular in the areas of early childhood education and care, the labour market, and child health. For example, parental leave would be of more limited use if there were inadequate provision of high-quality, accessible, affordable childcare when parents completed their period of leave. As Sweden has shown, the provision of paid parental leave can substantially reduce the demand for childcare-centre places for infants, but because more parents remain attached to the labour force during the first year of their children's lives, there is likely to be an increase in the demand for childcare places for toddlers and other children aged over 1 year. It is also possible that policies which provide on-site childcare places for infants might reduce the demand for extended parental leave among some parents who are in relatively permanent positions at workplaces with on-site childcare facilities; but current research from the United States cautions that the quality of centre-based infant care there may be a cause for concern.

- Parental-leave, and related policies, need to be viewed within their social contexts. The attitudes of families, employers, and society in general also have a major impact on childcare and paid work roles for women and men.

- There appear to be significant benefits to society, children, parents, and, at times, employers if children are breastfed. But there are also potential costs for women if breastfeeding creates "difference" from men in terms of labour-market participation and occupational segregation and reinforces the role of mothers as primary caregivers of children.

- In many countries, including New Zealand, the design of parental-leave policies has been based around issues of pregnancy and childbirth, but has not explicitly taken into account the issue of breastfeeding. There is potential for conflict between factors which encourage or compel women to have minimal breaks from paid work following the birth of a child and health policies which encourage the uptake and continuation of breastfeeding. Unless provisions are made for paid leave, or significant reforms occur in the workplace, there can be conflict for women wanting to remain attached to the work force and to breastfeed. In particular, this is the case for women in low-income occupations, which in New Zealand include a significant number of Maori and Pacific Islands mothers.

- While in most OECD countries there has been considerable focus on encouraging women to seek equality with men in paid work, there has been little focus on encouraging equality in unpaid work, in particular caring for children in the early months of their life. Until recently, this has included little statutory support for fathers taking parental leave. Some EC/EU and Nordic countries, notably Sweden, provide examples of how this policy balance can be altered. However, even in these countries relatively few men take extensive periods of parental leave, especially in the first 6 months of a child's life, although in these particular countries it has been suggested that breastfeeding is one complicating factor.

- In the Nordic countries, the factors leading men to take parental leave are complex. However, men who choose to take parental leave are usually well educated and have well-educated partners, and are likely to be more flexible in their views, or adaptable to the social changes involved in the decline in the gender division of labour. In contrast, it would appear that those New Zealand fathers statistically most likely to be at home are often there not through choice but through unemployment. However, in the case studies of families reported in chapter 6, several New Zealand fathers chose to be involved actively in caring for their children.

Early Childhood Education and Care

On the basis of the overseas and New Zealand research reviewed, it is evident that there are issues affecting children and parents, and pertinent to employers and policy makers.

Children, Parents, and Families

- The quality of early childhood education and care received and the stability of childcare arrangements are linked to infants' and young children's development.
- Matters of concern for parents in the paid work force are the availability of quality care for sufficient hours, and the geographic and financial accessibility of early education/care.

In addition the case studies describe how:

- Parents in paid work are concerned that early childhood education and care arrangements meet the emotional needs of their children during the first years of life, including the need for security.
- Parents are also concerned about whether 4-year-old children receive adequate cognitive, language, and social stimulation in early childhood education settings.
- Language maintenance is a priority for both Maori and migrant families with young children at early childhood centres.
- Maori children's involvement in the kohanga reo may facilitate their mothers' moving into further education.
- For some migrant families, English language acquisition, and stereotyped attitudes among peers in educational settings, impact on children and their parents.
- Social mores are not changing as rapidly as some families' childcare arrangements. It appears that as men take on roles which were once seen as women's roles, they experience difficulties because their childcare involvement is not in line with the expectations of many groups in society.

Employers

- Issues for employers include the reduced absenteeism and stress within family-friendly workplaces, which in some cases may link to increased productivity.

Policy Makers

There are several key findings which have implications for policy makers. Relevant research findings, based on the literature reviewed in chapter 4 and the case studies presented in chapter 6, are:

- Policies which promote the provision of high-quality early childhood education and care services are important to the education and wellbeing of children and their parents, and they benefit the wider society.

- Parents in paid work are striving to balance their young children's needs and their own needs, which can lead to their using several early childhood education and care services concurrently.

- Cost and funding issues are receiving some attention in international research. Findings suggest that the provision of high-quality early childhood education and care services is justified in terms of child outcomes and the benefits to parents and families. Research by developmental psychologists and educators from most countries, and notably from the Nordic countries, supports the universal provision of high-quality early childhood education and care which is publicly funded.

Partnered Mothers' Participation in Paid Work

- In New Zealand, over the last decade, an increasing proportion of partnered mothers have returned to paid work within the first year of a child's life. A number of factors could be driving this change including increased availability of child care, improved availability of parental leave, an increasing proportion of women in "career" type occupations, an increase in male unemployment and changing social attitudes.

- As women's time away from the labour force has declined, understanding the changes in behaviour within the first year after the birth has become more important. However, available data in New Zealand does not give a clear picture of the pattern of return to work by mothers, or the use of parental leave. Census data give an indication that in 1991 over a fifth of partnered mothers were attached to the paid labour force when their child is under 1 month old, but it appears a significant proportion may have been on parental leave.

- There are both similarities and differences between partnered mothers' patterns of paid work in New Zealand, the United States, and Sweden. The main similarity is that, for a considerable number of women in each country, having a child still leads to patterns of work quite different from that of most fathers, sometimes for only a short period but for many mothers throughout the child's school life.

- In the early 1990s mothers in Sweden had by far the highest participation rate in paid work, but with very few actually being back in their paid workplaces when their children were under 6 months old. At the other end of the spectrum, a significant proportion of American mothers were back at paid work within 4 months of the birth, but their overall attachment rates to the paid work force were lower than Swedish women. New Zealand partnered mothers' patterns of participation in paid work when children are very young were lower than those found in both Sweden and the United States, but more appeared to be back at paid work in the first 6 months than Swedish mothers.

- A major factor affecting Swedish mother's patterns of paid work in the first year of a child's life, and timing of return to paid work, appears to be the availability of a generous level of paid parental leave.

- But within different national populations there is also considerable diversity of patterns of paid work for mothers, both within family and between family types. In New Zealand there are significant differences in patterns of paid work between sole and partnered mothers, and between Maori, Pacific Islands and "other" women. While partnered Maori and Pacific Islands mothers are less likely than "other" mothers to be in paid work when their child is aged under 1, if they are in paid work they are more likely to work full time.

- In New Zealand, if labour-market and social trends follow that of the United States, there would appear to be the potential for considerable growth in the participation in paid work by mothers of young children, particularly within the first weeks and months following childbirth. How the patterns emerge will depend on a wide range of factors including parental-leave policies, the provision of affordable quality childcare, attitudes to and practices of breastfeeding, men's participation in unpaid work, and the ability of the economy to generate paid work for all those who want it. In most of these areas government policies have the potential, both directly and indirectly, to affect behaviour in the paid labour market of mothers and fathers following the birth of a child.

- However, while most 2-parent families deal with the issue of juggling paid and unpaid work, in 1991 a significant number of families had neither parent in paid work. This situation was found more frequently among Maori and Pacific Islands families.

Flexible Forms of Work and Parental Care of Children

- There is a wide range of types of labour-market flexibility, many of which can have a major impact on families. Labour-market flexibility appears to be driven primarily by the need for employers to become more competitive internationally. At times, this now means that many employees are under more pressure to work longer hours, or non-standard periods of work, creating potential conflicts between paid work and family responsibilities. However, there are also examples of employee-driven flexibilities which lead to a better balance between paid work and family life.

- The international research reviewed in chapter 5 shows how inequalities have been apparent between full-time and part-time work. These inequalities are linked to gender, as it is mainly women, particularly those with young children, who work part time. However, the conditions, status, costs, and benefits of part-time paid work are viewed differently within and across cultures. In addition, throughout the OECD there has been recent growth in male part-time work, although it is not so clearly linked to the need or wish to care for children. Recent studies suggest there is a need to "reconceptualise" part-time work.

- Homeworking, and its more recent high-technology version of teleworking, has the potential to provide ways of balancing paid work and family responsibilities, but does not remove the need for out-of-home childcare. However, new information and communication technologies also appear to have the potential to expand people's hours of paid work further, and to intrude into family life.

- The emerging concept of "family friendly" workplaces has the potential to assist employees to balance paid work and family responsibilities more effectively. There is certainly scope for more workplaces to become family friendly. However, there are specific limitations in implementing family-friendly practices. For example, the concept of the family-friendly workplace appears to present particular problems for breastfeeding practice, in the light of current recommendations for breastfeeding in the early months, as outlined in chapter 3. Another example is that of on-site childcare centres provided by employers. Some related complexities are discussed in chapter 4. One concern is that the education and care available to young children may become insufficiently stable to promote beneficial outcomes if early childhood provision is linked to labour-market characteristics.

- Although some research indicates there may be productivity gains for employers introducing such programmes, the links are still not clear.

Work, Families, and Education

- Theoretical models showing links between working life and family life focus on individuals. There appears scope for a redefinition of some models to include other family members. The congruence model, for example, proposes that the spheres of work and life are linked by aspects of the individual's personality. However, in the case studies presented in chapter 6, there are striking examples of both parents describing congruence between work and family life. For example in Family 2 and Family 10, where the main income earner spent 37 to 40 hours per week in paid work, both parents in these families described a harmonious fit between their personalities, the demands of their work, and meeting the needs of their spouse and children. By contrast, in other families there was tension between the demands of family, work, spouse, and children, which affected everyone.

- When discussing the interface between work, family, and education, issues related to gender, ethnicity, and social class are important. In many of the countries studied, the situation for white, middle-class, 2-parent families is significantly different from that of sole parents, migrants, or ethnic minorities, in terms of access to parental leave, to affordable early childhood education and care, and to well-paid flexible jobs. These differences are much less extreme in Sweden, but this has required major intervention by the state. In all countries, including Sweden, having children has a different impact on men's and women's patterns of paid and unpaid work, and thus the tension between their paid work and family life. However, within groups of women and within groups of men, there are also increasingly wide variations emerging in patterns of paid work.

Questions for Further Consideration

- Are there benefits of the state developing a more integrated work/family policy? Do the benefits of state involvement outweigh the potential costs of greater involvement in households?

- Do solutions which rely on individuals' bargaining, such as employer-provided childcare facilities or perhaps breastfeeding facilities within the context of a family-friendly workplace, mean that those in the best bargaining situations obtain the best arrangements for themselves and their children? Does this then mean that such solutions have the potential to reinforce inequalities not only between parents but also between children?

- Does the New Zealand government have a role in promoting gender equality in the home, and if so what is the best way to go about it? Is there a need for striking a balance between fostering equality of women in paid work and focusing on gender issues in unpaid work.

- Are arguments for promoting an increase in the care of children by fathers relevant to New Zealanders?

- Is there a conflict between promoting equality in paid work by women, and promoting breastfeeding? Is there also a potential conflict between promoting breastfeeding and encouraging the uptake of extended leave by men to look after infants and children. How are any conflicts best resolved?

- What are the outcomes of multiple use of early childhood education and care services for infants and for children of different ages?

- Are patterns of paid work changing so rapidly that facilities for the education and care of children need to be developed to suit evening, night, and weekend work patterns of their parents?

- Are we as a society moving towards a model where increased hours of paid work by parents, and less parental care of children, is seen as the "norm"? Is the balance between working life and family life changing? What is the optimum? What options regarding hours of paid work would meet the needs of parents, employers, and children?
- Is one alternative option a society where parents, particularly fathers, of young children can decrease their hours of paid work to reach a new balance between work and family life? Or, in fact, is there an increasing diversity of patterns emerging, each suiting particular parents' and children's needs?
- Do the benefits to families, but in particular women and children, of paid parental leave combined with a well-developed childcare system, both publicly funded, outweigh the high costs to taxpayers? At the other end of the spectrum, does the system in the United States of minimal government assistance to families of young children simply mean that in some cases unsustainable costs are passed to individual families, with subsequent poor outcomes in the labour market, health, and education, particularly for women and children?
- In view of the research support for paid parental leave, especially for low-income families, what might be the most effective mechanisms for implementing paid parental leave?
- Is it likely that the trend among New Zealand mothers towards earlier resumption of paid work following birth will continue? What will be the main factors driving or restraining such a trend? What are the implications for provision of childcare for infants aged under 1 year?
- What are the arguments for determining the balance between policies which encourage parents to take a period of leave to look after children following the birth, and policies which encourage and assist non-parental care of children? How does the age of the child influence this debate?

The researchers hope that the research findings presented in this document will provide a focus for informed discussion of the complex issues presented and the informed formulation of policies to provide the best "package" of services to match the varied needs of families - however these are defined - and society.

Striking a Balance

A joint project between

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